Medieval Mosaic II

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And here therefore, I sing my songs and tell my stories. For folks need songs, they need such stories. Without the tales we build and tell, we've naught to put our needs and natures to, naught to hold us back from being lost.

(From *Lir*, by Coral Atkinson)

For: The Bratticus Maximus and El Bandido Malo

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Introduction

In Medieval Mosaic I, we wrote a great deal about fables, food, and King Arthur. In this sequel, we've written much about arts and crafts and Celtic mythology.

Celtic mythology serves as a history of the Celtic peoples, as implied by the following paragraphs from The Celts, by Nora Chadwick.

"In material culture the Celtic peoples heralded modern civilization. Their widespread use of iron enabled them to conquer vast tracts of land and to increase the amenities of life by felling forests and opening up new areas for agriculture. It revolutionized their method of warfare by making available in quantity the strong iron slashing sword and their economy by opening up hitherto unworked land, later to be controlled by their great hill-top towns or oppida. With the development of their oppida their institutions developed. Their control of important raw materials gave them a profitable trade and a developed system of barter and eventually of coinage. These things they shared with other peoples of the ancient world. Yet they were separated by a great gulf from the greatest civilizations of that world. They did not use the art of writing to any great extent and then not until near the end of their independence. They chose to record their past orally and communicated with other nations by word of mouth. Inevitably we view the ancient Celtic peoples of continental Europe through Greek and Roman eyes, for they have left no written records of themselves."

"…Among the ancient southern civilizations with their written documents, all individual experience, whether practical or intellectual, could quickly be pooled so as to become the common property of the community, whereas among the illiterate Celtic peoples experience was exchanged orally, and in certain aspects may have been fragmented. Writing has become so integral a part of modern civilization that it is difficult to remember that it is a comparatively recent acquisition, and originally very restricted in area. The Celtic peoples did not acquire it till the fifth century CE, and to transmit their traditions and to give permanence to their thoughts they depended on the spoken word."

Mythology does not deal in facts. But it does illustrate the loves and sorrows, the conflicts, and the ideas about ideal life of the ancient Celts. We are glad to have the opportunity to add our selections to the accumulated impressions of Celtic life.

The Age of Chivalry

Featured in *The Age of Chivalry*, by Thomas Bulfinch, are the legendary figures of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, Robin Hood, Richard the Lionhearted and his crusaders, and a host of other famous and lesser-known characters. This collection includes tales from Camelot, dramatic narratives from The Mabinogion, and stories of the noble warriors of English history. Bullfinch emphasizes the chivalrous code of honor, which was central to the ideals of medieval knighthood. He also explores religious and mystical aspects of chivalry, such as the quest for the Holy Grail. As well as relating these ancient myths and legends, Bulfinch also discusses their roles in literature and art. It is a must-read for anyone interested in medieval history, mythology, and literature.

About the author

Thomas Bulfinch (1796 – 1867) was a native of Boston, Mass. His boyhood was spent in that city, and he prepared for college in the Boston schools. He finished his scholastic training at Harvard College, and after taking his degree was for a period a teacher in his home city. He used his leisure time for further pursuit of the classical studies which he had begun at Harvard. He is known best for *Bulfinch's Mythology*, a combination of his three volumes of mythologies:

The Age of Fable, or Stories of Gods and Heroes
The Age of Chivalry, or Legends of King Arthur
Legends of Charlemagne, or Romance of the Middle Ages

Bulfinch's Mythology is a classic work of popularized mythology, the standard for more than a century and still in print. The compilation was assembled posthumously by Edward Everett Hale. Bulfinch wrote in his preface:

"Our work is not for the learned, nor for the theologian, nor for the philosopher, but for the reader of English literature, of either sex, who wishes to comprehend the allusions so frequently made by public speakers, lecturers, essayists, and poets, and those which occur in polite conversation."

In the original volume, Bulfinch included this in the preface: "We hope to teach mythology not as a study, but as a relaxation from study; to give our work the charm of a story-book, yet by means of it to impart a knowledge of an important branch of education. "

From the Introductions

King Arthur and his Knights:
On the decline of the Roman power, about five centuries after Christ, the countries of Northern Europe were left almost destitute of a national government. Numerous chiefs, more or less powerful, held local sway, as far as each could enforce his dominion, and occasionally those chiefs would unite for a common object; but, in ordinary times, they were much more likely to be found in hostility to one another. In such a state of things, the rights of the humbler classes of society were at the mercy of every assailant; and it is plain that, without some check upon the lawless power of the chiefs, society must have relapsed into barbarism. Such checks were found, first, in the rivalry of the chiefs themselves, whose mutual jealousy made them restraints upon one another; secondly, in the influence of the Church, which, by every motive, pure or selfish, was pledged to interpose for the protection of the weak; and lastly, in the generosity and sense of right which, however crushed under the weight of passion and selfishness, dwell naturally in the heart of man. From this last source sprang Chivalry, which framed an ideal of the heroic character, combining invincible strength and valor, justice, modesty, loyalty to superiors, courtesy to equals, compassion to weakness, and devotedness to the Church; an ideal which, if never met within real life, was acknowledged by all as the highest model for emulation.

Accordingly, we find in the romances, which, however fabulous in facts, are true as pictures of manners, that the rights of the unarmed multitude were of no account. On a cool estimate, we cannot but see reason to congratulate ourselves that this has given way in modern times to the reign of law, and that the civil magistrate, if less picturesque, has taken the place of the mailed champion.

In ages when there were no books, when noblemen and princes themselves could not read, history or tradition was monopolized by the story−tellers. They inherited, generation after generation, the wondrous tales of their predecessors, which they retailed to the public with such additions of their own as their acquired information supplied them with. Anachronisms became of course very common, and errors of geography, of locality, of manners, equally so. Spurious genealogies were invented, in which Arthur and his knights, and Charlemagne and his paladins, were made to derive their descent from Aeneas, Hector, or some other of the Trojan heroes.

The Mabinogion:
The Welsh language is one of the oldest in Europe. It possesses poems the origin of which is referred with probability to the sixth century. The language of some of these is so antiquated, that the best scholars differ about the interpretation of many passages; but, generally speaking, the body of poetry

which the Welsh possess, from the year 1000 downwards, is intelligible to those who are acquainted with the modern language. The authors to whom the oldest Welsh poems are attributed are Aneurin, who is supposed to have lived A.D. 500 and 550, and Taliesin, Llywarch Hen (Llywarch the Aged), and Myrddin or Merlin, who were a few years later.

King Richard and the Third Crusade:
The Crusades were the mightiest or rather the most ambitious undertaking of the chivalry of Europe. From the year 1096 for more than a century the knights of all countries looked to the Holy Land as a field for winning their spurs and obtaining pardon of their sins. And it is most natural that in giving a picture of English chivalry as it is shown in history that we should give a description of King Richard's exploits in Palestine.

In the last decade of the twelfth century Richard I of England took the cross, which had come to him as a sort of legacy from his father, and sailed for Antioch, which was being besieged by the Christians, to assist in the war in the Holy Land. At the same time Philip Augustus of France and Frederick Barbarossa joined the Crusaders.

Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest:
Every reader of *Ivanhoe*, at the mention of Richard the Crusader, will be reminded of Robin Hood, the noble outlaw of Sherwood Forest, and his band of merry bowmen. With these we next concern ourselves, and if the reader will pardon the dry outlines of the historian before proceeding to the more interesting and imaginative story of the ballad-singer, we will at first state what so careful an antiquary as Mr. Ritson considers to be truly trustworthy in Robin Hood's history.

Robin Hood was born at Locksley, in the county of Nottingham, in the reign of King Henry II, and about the year of Christ 1160. His extraction was noble, and his true name Robert Fitzooth, which vulgar pronunciation easily corrupted into Robin Hood. He is frequently styled, and commonly reputed to have been, Earl of Huntingdon; a title to which, in the latter part of his life at least, he actually appears to have had some sort of pretension. In his youth he is reported to have been of a wild and extravagant disposition, insomuch that, his inheritance being consumed or forfeited by his excesses, and his person outlawed for debt, either from necessity or choice he sought an asylum in the woods and forests.

Friar Tuck was the only man of the clergy with whom Robin had friendly dealings. As a rule, these churchmen fared as did the Bishop of Hereford in the following ballad, which we add for the sake of an example of the manner in which this True History of Robin Hood has come down to us from the year 1245.

The Bishop of Hereford's Entertainment by Robin Hood

and Little John and their company, in merry Barnsdale

Some they will talk of bold Robin Hood,
And some of barons bold;
But I'll tell you how he served the Bishop of Hereford,
When he robbed him of his gold.

As it befell in merry Barnsdale,
All under the greenwood tree,
The Bishop of Hereford was to come by,
With all his company.

"Come, kill me a venison," said bold Robin Hood,
"And dress it by the highway side,
And we will watch the bishop narrowly,
Lest some other way he should ride."

Robin Hood dressed himself in shepherd's attire,
With six of his men also,
And, when the Bishop of Hereford came by,
They about the fire did go.

"O, what is the matter?" then said the bishop,
"Or for whom do you make this ado?
Or why do you kill the king's ven'son,
When your company is so few?"

"We are shepherds," said bold Robin Hood,
"And we keep sheep all the year;
And we are disposed to be merry this day,
And to kill of the king's fat deer."

"You are brave fellows," said the bishop,
"And the king of your doings shall know;
Therefore make haste, and come along with me,
For before the king you shall go."

"O pardon, O pardon," said bold Robin Hood,
"O pardon, I thee pray;
For it becomes not your lordship's coat
To take so many lives away."

"No pardon, no pardon," said the bishop,
"No pardon I thee owe;
Therefore make haste, and come along with me,
For before the king you shall go."

Then Robin he set his back against a tree,
And his foot against a thorn,
And from underneath his shepherd's coat
He pulled out a bugle horn.

He put the little end to his mouth,
And a loud blast did he blow,
Till threescore and ten of bold Robin's men
Came running all in a row:
All making obeisance to bold Robin Hood;
'Twas a comely sight for to see.

"What is the matter, master," said Little John,
"That you blow so lustily?"
"O here is the Bishop of Hereford,
And no pardon we shall have."

"Cut off his head, master," said Little John,
"And throw him into his grave."
"O pardon, O pardon," said the bishop,
"O pardon, I thee pray;
For if I had known it had been you,
I'd have gone some other way."

"No pardon, no pardon," said bold Robin Hood,
"No pardon I thee owe;
Therefore make haste, and come along with me,
For to merry Barnsdale you shall go."

Then Robin he took the bishop by the hand,
And led him to merry Barnsdale;
He made him stay and sup with him that night,
And to drink wine, beer, and ale.

"Call in a reckoning," said the bishop,
"For methinks it grows wondrous high."
"Send me your purse, master," said Little John,
"And I'll tell you bye and bye."

Then Little John took the bishop's cloak,
And spread it upon the ground,
And out of the bishop's portmantua
He told three hundred pound.

"Here's money enough, master," said Little John,
"And a comely sight 'tis to see;
It makes me in charity with the bishop,
Though he heartily loveth not me."

Robin Hood took the bishop by the hand,
And he caused the music to play;
And he made the old bishop to dance in his boots,
And glad to get so away.

The Ballad of Chevy Chase:
Scarcely less famous than Robin Hood as a subject for ballad makers was the battle of Chevy Chase. This battle was one of the many struggles rising out of the never-ending border quarrels between Scotland and England, of which poets are never tired of singing. Sometimes the Earl of Douglas, the great Scotch border-lord, would make an incursion into Northumberland, and then to revenge the insult Lord Percy would come riding over
the Tweed into Scotland.

The Ballad:
God prosper Long our noble king,
Our lives and safetyes all;
A woefull hunting once there did
In Chevy Chase befall.

To drive the deer with hound and horne,
Erle Percy took his way,
The child may rue that is unborne
The hunting of that day.

The stout Erle of Northumberland
A vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summer days to take;
The cheefest harts in Chevy Chase
To kill and bear away.

These tidings to Erle Douglas came,

In Scotland where he lay,
Who sent Erle Percy present word
He would prevent his sport.

The English Erle not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort,
With fifteen hundred bowmen bold;
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well in time of neede
To ayme their shafts aright.

The gallant greyhounds swiftly ran
To chase the fallow deere:
On Monday they began to hunt
Ere daylight did appear;
And long before high noon they had
An hundred fat buckes slaine;
Then having dined the drovyers went
To rouse the deer again.

The bowmen mustered on the hill,
Well able to endure;
Their backsides all, with special care,
That day were guarded sure.

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
The nimble deere to take,
That with their cryes the hills and dales
An eccho shrill did make.

Lord Percy to the quarry went,
To view the slaughtered deer;
Quoth he, Erle Douglas promised
This day to meet me heere;
But if I thought he would not come,
Noe longer would I stay.

With that a brave young gentleman
Thus to the Erle did say:
Loe, yonder doth Erle Douglas come,
His men in armour bright;
Full twenty hundred Scottish speres
All marching in our sight;
All men of pleasant Tivydale,
Fast by the river Tweede.

O cease your sports, Erle Percy said,
And take your bowes with speede.
And now with me, my countrymen,
Your courage forth advance;
For there was never champion yett
In Scotland or in France,
That ever did on horseback come,
But if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
With him to break a spere.

Erle Douglas on his milk-white steede,
Most like a baron bold,
Rode foremost of his company,
Whose armour shone like gold.

Show me, sayd he, whose men you be,
That hunt so boldly heere,
That without my consent doe chase
And kill my fallow deere.

The first man that did answer make
Was noble Percy he;
Who sayd, We list not to declare,
Nor show whose men we be.
Yet we will spend our deerest blood,
Thy cheefest harts to slay.

The Douglas swore a solempne oathe,
And thus in rage did say,
Ere thus I will outbraved be,
One of us two shall dye:
I know thee well an erle thou art;
Lord Percy, soe am I.
But trust me, Percy, pittye it were
And great offence to kill
Any of these our guiltless men,
For they have done no ill.

Let thou and I the battell trye,
And set our men aside.
Accurst be he, Erle Percy sayd,
By whom this is denyed.

Then stept a gallant squier forth,
Witherington was his name,
Who said, I wold not have it told
To Henry our king for shame,
That ere my captaine fought on foot
And I stood looking on.

You be two erles, sayd Witherington,
And I a squier alone:
Ile doe the best that doe I may,
While I have power to stand:
While I have power to wield my sword,
Ile fight with hart and hand.

Our English archers bent their bowes
Their harts were good and trew;
At the first flight of arrowes sent,
Full fourscore Scots they slew.
Yet bides Erle Douglas on the bent,
As cheeftain stout and good,
As valiant captain, all unmoved,
The shock he firmly stood.

His host he parted had in three,
As leader ware and tryd,
And soon his spearmen on his foes
Bare down on every side.
To drive the deere with hound and horne,
Douglas bade on the bent:
Two captaines moved with mickle might
Their speares to shivers went.

Throughout the English archery
They dealt full many a wound;
But still our valiant Englishmen
All firmly kept their ground:
And throwing straight their bowes away,
They grasped their swords so bright:
And now sharp blows, a heavy shower,
On shields and helmets light.

They closed full fast on every side,
No slackness there was found;
And many a gallant gentleman
Lay gasping on the ground.

O Christ! it was a griefe to see,
And likewise for to heare,
The cries of men lying in their gore,
And scattered here and there.

At last these two stout erles did meet,
Like captaines of great might;
Like lyons wood, they layd on lode
And made a cruell fight:
They fought until they both did sweat,
With swords of tempered steele;
Until the blood, like drops of rain,
They trickling down did feele.

Yield thee, Lord Percy, Douglas sayd;
In faith I will thee bringe,
Where thou shalt high advanced be
By James our Scottish king:
Thy ransome I will freely give,
And this report of thee:
Thou art the most courageous knight
That ever I did see.

Noe, Douglas, quoth Erle Percy then,
Thy proffer I do scorne;
I will not yield to any Scott,
That ever yet was borne.

With that there came an arrow keene,
Out of an English bow,
Which struck Erle Douglas to the heart,
A deepe and deadly blow:
Who never spake more words than these,
Fight on, my merry men all;
For why, my life is at an end;
Lord Percy sees my fall.

Then leaving liffe, Erle Percy tooke
The dead man by the hand;
And said, Erle Douglas, for thy life
Wold I have lost my land.
O Christ, my very hart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake;
For sure a more redoubted knight

Mischance cold never take.

A knight among the Scotts there was
Who saw Erle Douglas dye,
Who streight in wrath did vow revenge
Upon the Lord Percy.

Sir Hugh Montgomery was he called,
Who, with a spear most bright,
Well mounted on a gallant steed,
Ran fiercely through the fight;
And past the English archers all,
Without all dread and feare;
And through Earl Percy's body then
He thrust his hatefull speare;
With such a vehement force and might
He did his body gore,
The staff ran through the other side
A large cloth-yard or more.

So thus did both these nobles dye,
Whose courage none could staine:
An English archer then perceived
The noble erle was slaine;
He had a bow bent in his hand,
Made of a trusty tree;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
Up to the head drew he:
Against Sir Hugh Montgomery,
So right the shaft he sett,
The grey goose-wing that was thereon,
In his hart's blood was wett.

This fight did last from break of day
Till setting of the sun;
For when they rang the evening-bell
The battle scarce was done.

With stoute Erle Percy there was slaine
Sir John of Egerton,
Sir Robert Ratcliff, and Sir John,
Sir James that bold barron:
And with Sir George and stoute Sir James
Both knights of good account,
Good Sir Ralph Raby there was slaine,

Whose prowese did surmount.

For Witherington my hart is woe,
That ever he slain should be;
For when his legs were hewn in two
He knelt and fought on his knee.

And with Erle Douglas there was slaine
Sir Hugh Montgomery,
Sir Charles Murray, that from the field
One foot wold never flee.
Sir Charles Murray, of Ratcliff too,
His sister's sonne was he;
Sir David Lamb, so well esteem'd,
Yet saved cold not be,
And the Lord Maxwell in like case
Did with Erle Douglas dye:
Of twenty hundred Scottish speres
Scarce fifty-five did flye.

Of fifteen hundred Englishmen,
Went home but fifty-three;
The rest were slaine in Chevy Chase,
Under the greene woode tree.

Next day did many widowes come,
Their husbands to bewayle;
They washed their wounds in brinish teares,
But all wold not prevayle.
Theyr bodyes, bathed in purple gore,
They bore with them away;
They kist them dead a thousand times,
Ere they were cladd in clay.

The newes was brought to Eddenborrow,
Where Scotland's king did raigne,
That brave Erle Douglas suddenlye
Was with an arrow slaine.
O heavy newes, King James did say,
Scotland may witness be,
I have not any captain more
Of such account as he.

Like tydings to King Henry came,
Within as short a space,

That Percy of Northumberland
Was slaine in Chevy Chase:
Now God be with him, said the king,
Sith it will noe better be;
I trust I have within my realme,
Five hundred as good as he.

Yet shall not Scotts nor Scotland say,
But I will vengeance take;
Ile be revenged on them all
For brave Erle Percy's sake.

This vow full well the king performed
After at Humbledowne;
In one day fifty knights were slaine,
With lords of great renowne;
And of the rest of small account,
Did many thousands dye:
Thus ended the hunting of Chevy Chase
Made by the Erle Percy.

God save our king, and bless this land
With plentye, joy, and peace;
And grant henceforth that foule debate
'Twixt noblemen may cease.

The Battle of Otterbourne:
Another famous battle in the border-warfare between England and Scotland was fought at Otterbourne. This is a town in Northumberland, and here, as in Chevy Chase, the Douglas and the Percy matched their strength. Earl Douglas was killed in the fight, and sir Henry Percy, called Hotspur, was taken prisoner. The story as it is told here is from the works of that most entertaining and long-winded historian of chivalry, Sir John Froissart.

Edward the Black Prince:
"Ich Dien"
The last hero of English chivalry with whom we have to do is Edward the Black Prince. And as the most characteristic part of the knighthood of this most knightly of English princes, we have selected the battles of Crecy and of Poitiers.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Acre

Acre is a city in the coastal plain region of the Northern District of Israel. The city occupies a strategic location and was an important waypoint on the region's coastal road. It was first settled during the Early Bronze Age and is among the oldest continuously inhabited settlements on Earth.

Acre was a hugely important city during the Crusades as a maritime foothold on the Mediterranean coast of the southern Levant and was the site of several battles, including the 1189–1191 Siege of Acre and 1291 Siege of Acre. It was the last stronghold of the Crusaders in the Holy Land prior to that final battle in 1291. At the end of Crusader rule, the city was destroyed by the Mamluks, thereafter existing as a modest fishing village until the 18th century.

Antioch

Antioch was a Hellenistic Greek city founded in 300 BC. During the Crusades, Antioch served as the capital of the Principality of Antioch, one of four Crusader states that were founded in the Levant. Its inhabitants were known as Antiochenes. The modern city of Antakya, in Turkey, was named after the ancient city, which lies in ruins on the Orontes River and did not overlap in habitation with the modern city.

Armorica

In ancient times, Armorica was a region of Gaul between the Seine and the Loire that includes the Brittany Peninsula and much of historical Normandy. The name Armorica means 'place in front of the sea.' Pliny the Elder, in his Natural History lists many Celtic tribes as living in the area. Trade between Armorica and Britain was long-established. Archaeological sites along the south coast of England show connections with Armorica as far east as the Solent. This 'prehistoric' connection of Cornwall and Brittany set the stage for the link that continued into the medieval era.

Chevy Chase

There are varying accounts of a battle that took place in 1388. One version describes a large hunting party on a parcel of hunting land (or chase) in the

Cheviot Hills, hence the term, Chevy Chase. The hunt is led by Percy, the English Earl of Northumberland. The Scottish Earl of Douglas had forbidden this hunt, and interprets it as an invasion of Scotland. In response he attacks, causing a bloody battle which only 110 people survived. One version of the ballad bears the name of "Chevy Chase;" another is called "The Hunting of the Cheviot."

Cyprus

Cyprus is an island country in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, the third largest and third-most populous island in the Mediterranean. It is east of Greece, north of Egypt, south of Turkey, and west of Lebanon and Syria. Its capital and largest city is Nicosia.

Cyprus was first settled by hunter-gatherers around 13,000 years ago, with farming settlements emerging a few thousand years later. Cyprus belonged to the Mycenaean Greeks at the end of the 2nd millennium BCE, but since then, it has been won and lost by many powers, including Alexander the Great.

In 1191, during the Third Crusade, Richard I of England captured the island from Isaac Komnenos, a member of the Byzantine imperial family. Richard used it as a major supply base that was relatively safe from the Saracens. A year later Richard sold the island to the Knights Templar, who, following a bloody revolt, in turn sold it to Guy of Lusignan.

Eddenborrow

Eddenborrow is an old spelling of Edinburgh, "Where Scotland's king did raigne." It has the advantage, at least, of being spelled the way the name is pronounced.

Edward the Black Prince

Edward of Woodstock (1330 – 1376), known to history as the Black Prince, was the eldest son of King Edward III of England. Edward earned distinction as one of the most successful English commanders during the Hundred Years' War, being regarded by his contemporaries as a model of chivalry and one of the greatest knights of his age.

Edward was made Duke of Cornwall, the first English dukedom, in 1337. He was created Prince of Wales in 1343 and knighted by his father at La Hougue in 1346, the same year he commanded the vanguard at the Battle of Crécy.

Prince Edward spent his life fighting and died in 1376 of dysentery. He was buried in Canterbury Cathedral, where his surcoat, helmet, shield, and gauntlets are still preserved.

Frederick Barbarossa

Frederick Barbarossa (1122 – 1190), also known as Frederick I, was the Holy Roman Emperor from 1155 until his death. He was elected King of Germany, crowned King of Italy, and later, crowned King of Burgundy. He was named Barbarossa by the northern Italian cities which he attempted to rule. Barbarossa means "red beard" in Italian.

Frederick joined the Third Crusade and opted to travel overland to the Holy Land. In 1190, Frederick drowned attempting to cross the Saleph River, leading to most of his army abandoning the Crusade before reaching Acre.

Historians consider him among the Holy Roman Empire's greatest medieval emperors. He combined qualities that made him appear almost superhuman to his contemporaries: his longevity, his ambition, his extraordinary skills at organization, his battlefield acumen, and his political perspicacity. His contributions to Central European society and culture include the re-establishment of the Roman rule of law, which counterbalanced the papal power that then dominated the German states.

Holy Land

The Holy Land is a term which usually refers to a territory roughly corresponding to the modern states of Israel and Palestine. Part of the significance of the land stems from the religious significance of Jerusalem (the holiest city to Judaism, and the location of the First and Second Temples), as well as its historical significance as the setting for most of the Bible, the historical locale of Jesus' ministry, and for various other events.

The holiness of the land as a destination of Christian pilgrimage contributed to launching the Crusades, as European Christians sought to win back the Holy Land from Muslims, who had conquered it from the Christian Eastern Roman Empire in 630 CE. In the 19th century, the Holy Land became the subject of diplomatic wrangling which led to the Crimean War in the 1850s.

Many sites in the Holy Land have long been pilgrimage destinations for adherents of the Abrahamic religions, including Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Bahá’ís.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem is a city in the Southern Levant, on a plateau in the Judaean Mountains between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea. One of the oldest cities in the world, it is considered holy to the three major Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Bahá'ís. Both Israel and Palestine claim Jerusalem as their capital city. Israel has its primary governmental institutions there, and the State of Palestine ultimately foresees it as its seat of power. Neither claim is widely recognized internationally.

Throughout its long history, Jerusalem has been destroyed at least twice, besieged 23 times, captured and recaptured 44 times, and attacked 52 times. The part of Jerusalem called the City of David shows first signs of settlement in the 4th millennium BCE, in the shape of encampments of nomadic shepherds. By the 9th century BCE, the city had developed into the religious and administrative center of the Kingdom of Judah. In 1538 CE, the city walls were rebuilt for a last time around Jerusalem under Suleiman the Magnificent of the Ottoman Empire. Today those walls define the Old City, which since the 19th century, has been divided into four quarters — the Armenian, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim quarters. In 2022, Jerusalem had a population of some 971,800 residents.

During the Crusades, Jerusalem changed hands multiple times, being captured by the Crusaders in 1099 and recaptured by Saladin in 1187.

Joseph Ritson

Joseph Ritson (1752 – 1803) was an English antiquary known for editing the first scholarly collection of Robin Hood ballads (1795). He was a staunch supporter of the French Revolution and an influential vegetarianism activist. Ritson is also known for his collections of English nursery rhymes, such as *Roses Are Red* and *Little Bo-Peep*, in *Gammer Gurton's Garland* or *The Nursery Parnassus*, published in London.

Ritson spared no pains to ensure accuracy in the texts of old songs, ballads and metrical romances which he edited. His collection of the Robin Hood ballads is perhaps his greatest single achievement. He gave in to his own political prejudices as a Jacobin when he included the idea, uncommon until then, that Robin Hood robbed the rich and gave to the poor rather than simply robbing the bishops and the Sheriff of Nottingham.

King Henry VIII

Henry VIII (1491 – 1547) was King of England from 1509 until his death in 1547. Henry is known for his six marriages and his efforts to have his first marriage (to Catherine of Aragon) annulled. His disagreement with Pope Clement VII about such an annulment led Henry to initiate the English Reformation, separating the Church of England from papal authority. He appointed himself Supreme Head of the Church of England and dissolved convents and monasteries, for which he was excommunicated by the pope.

Henry brought radical changes to the Constitution of England, expanding royal power and ushering in the theory of the divine right of kings in opposition to papal supremacy. He frequently used charges of treason and heresy to quell dissent, and those accused were often executed without a formal trial.

Henry was an extravagant spender, using proceeds from the dissolution of the monasteries and acts of the Reformation Parliament. Despite this, he was often on the verge of financial ruin due to personal extravagance and costly and largely unproductive wars. He expanded the Royal Navy, oversaw the annexation of Wales to England, and was the first English monarch to rule as King of Ireland following the Crown of Ireland Act 1542.

Henry's contemporaries considered him an attractive, educated, and accomplished king. He has been described as "one of the most charismatic rulers to sit on the English throne" and his reign described as the "most important" in English history. He was an author and composer. He is frequently characterized in his later life as a lustful, egotistical, paranoid, and tyrannical monarch. Henry claimed descent from Constantine the Great and King Arthur and saw himself as their successor.

Levant

Levant comes from the French *lever*, "to rise," as in sunrise, meaning the east. Historically, it is the region along the eastern Mediterranean shores, roughly corresponding to modern-day Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and certain adjacent areas. Common use of the term is associated with Venetian and other trading ventures and the establishment of commerce with cities such as Tyre and Sidon as a result of the Crusades. It was also used for Anatolia and as a synonym for the Middle East or Near East. A similar term, Al-Mashriq ("Where the Sun Rises"), exists in Arabic, although this term refers to a broader geographic region.

Otterbourne

Otterburn is a small village in Northumberland, England. It lies within the Cheviot Hills about 16 miles from the Scottish border. It was the site of a major battle in 1388 between English and Scottish armies. The engagement, in which the Scots took Sir Henry Percy captive, is the subject of the English *Ballad of Chevy Chase* and the Scots ballad *Otterburn*.

The battle of Otterburn ended in an English rout. Despite James Douglas, 2nd Earl of Douglas being killed, Percy was captured and over a thousand of the English were taken, left dead on the field, or slain as they fled.

Philip Augustus of France

Philip II (1165 – 1223), also known as Philip Augustus, was King of France from 1180 to 1223. He was called "Augustus" for having extended the crown lands of France so remarkably. Philip transformed France into the most prosperous and powerful country in Europe. He checked the power of the nobles and helped the towns free themselves from seigneurial authority, granting privileges and liberties to the emergent bourgeoisie. He built a great wall around Paris, re-organized the French government, and brought financial stability to his country.

Philip travelled to the Holy Land to participate in the Third Crusade of 1189–1192 with King Richard I of England and Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa. Things did not go well and he spent much of the rest of his life in conflict with Richard the Lionheart.

Queen Catherine of Aragon

Catherine of Aragon (1485 – 1536) was Queen of England as the first wife of King Henry VIII from their marriage on 11 June 1509 until its annulment on 23 May 1533. She was Princess of Wales while married to Henry's elder brother, Arthur, Prince of Wales, for a short period before his death.

She was three years old when she was betrothed to Arthur, heir apparent to the English throne. They married in 1501, but Arthur died five months later. Catherine spent years in limbo, and during this time, held the position of ambassador of the Aragonese crown to England in 1507, the first known female ambassador in European history. She married Henry shortly after his accession in 1509. For six months in 1513, she served as regent of England while Henry was in France. During that time the English defeated a Scottish invasion at the Battle of Flodden, an event in which Catherine played an

important part with an emotional speech about courage and patriotism.

By 1526, Henry was infatuated with Anne Boleyn and dissatisfied that his marriage to Catherine had produced no surviving sons, leaving their daughter Mary as heir presumptive at a time when there was no established precedent for a woman on the throne. He sought to have their marriage annulled, setting in motion a chain of events that led to England's schism with the Catholic Church. Catherine refused to accept Henry as supreme head of the Church in England and considered herself the king's rightful wife and queen, attracting much popular sympathy. Despite this, Henry acknowledged her only as dowager princess of Wales. After being banished from court by Henry, Catherine lived out the remainder of her life at Kimbolton Castle, dying there in January 1536. The English people held Catherine in high esteem, and her death set off tremendous mourning. Her daughter Mary would become the first undisputed English queen regnant in 1553.

Catherine commissioned The Education of a Christian Woman by Juan Luis Vives, who dedicated the book, controversial at the time, to the Queen in 1523. Such was Catherine's impression on people that even her adversary Thomas Cromwell said of her, "If not for her sex, she could have defied all the heroes of History."

Richard I of England

Richard I (1157 – 1199), known as Richard Coeur de Lion or Richard the Lionheart because of his reputation as a great military leader and warrior, was King of England from 1189 until his death in 1199.

By the age of 16, Richard had taken command of his own army, putting down rebellions against his father in Poitou. Richard was an important Christian commander during the Third Crusade, leading the campaign after the departure of Philip II of France and achieving several victories against his Muslim counterpart, Saladin, although he finalized a peace treaty and ended the campaign without retaking Jerusalem.

Saladin

Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub (c. 1137 – 1193), known as Saladin, was the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty. Hailing from a Kurdish family, he was the first sultan of both Egypt and Syria. An important figure of the Third Crusade, he spearheaded the Muslim military effort against the Crusader states in the Levant. At the height of his power, the Ayyubid realm spanned Egypt, Syria, Upper Mesopotamia, the Hejaz, Yemen, and Nubia.

The Battle of Jaffa (1192) proved to be the last military engagement of the Third Crusade. After Richard I reoccupied Jaffa and restored its fortifications, he and Saladin discussed terms. At last Richard agreed to demolish the fortifications of Ascalon, while Saladin agreed to recognize Crusader control of the Palestinian coast from Tyre to Jaffa. The Christians would be allowed to travel as unarmed pilgrims to Jerusalem, and Saladin's kingdom was at peace with the Crusader states for the following three years.

Sangreal

The Holy Grail (French: *Saint Graal*) is a treasure that serves as an important motif in Arthurian literature. Various traditions describe the Holy Grail as a cup, dish, or stone with miraculous healing powers, sometimes providing eternal youth or sustenance in infinite abundance, often guarded in the custody of the Fisher King and located in the hidden Grail castle. By analogy, any elusive object or goal of great significance may be perceived as a "holy grail" by those seeking such.

Thracians

The Thracians were an Indo-European speaking people who inhabited large parts of Southeast Europe in ancient history. They resided mainly in modern-day Bulgaria, Romania, and northern Greece, but also in north-western Anatolia in Turkey. The Thracian culture emerged during the early Bronze Age and flourished in the 3rd and 2nd millennium BCE.

The first historical record of the name Thracian is found in the *Iliad*, where Thracians are described as allies of the Trojans in the Trojan War against the Ancient Greeks.

The Thracians were conquered by the Romans in the mid 2nd century BCE. In 73 BCE, Spartacus, a Thracian warrior who was enslaved as a gladiator by the Romans, led a revolt that posed a significant challenge to Roman authority, prompting a series of military campaigns. The aftermath of the rebellion saw the crucifixion of 6,000 surviving rebels along the Appian Way.

While the Thracians were perceived as unsophisticated by the Romans and Greeks, their culture was reportedly noted for its sophisticated poetry and music.

Turks

Turkic peoples, or Turks, are historically and linguistically connected with the nomadic people who in the 6th century CE founded an empire stretching from what is now Mongolia and the northern frontier of China to the Black Sea. Their most important cultural link, aside from history and language, is with Islam. Turks are the 13th largest ethnic group in the world.

Although the ancient Turks were nomadic, they traded wool, leather, carpets, and horses for grain, silk, wood, and vegetables, and also had large ironworking stations in the south of the Altai Mountains during the 600s CE.

WORDS and PHRASES

anachronism

An anachronism is an error of chronology in which something, such as an object or event, is placed in the wrong time. The word describes a situation in which something happens that should not because it belongs to another time period. You see anachronisms all the time in the movies — they occur when you see a jet fly over a Civil War battle, or knights jousting over a maiden during the time of Shakespeare. Or when you say you're going to dial your smartphone.

ban-dog

A ban-dog is any dog, such as a mastiff or a bloodhound, kept tied or chained because of its ferocity. Dogs of this type are unmatched in their guarding and protection abilities (they weigh at least 100 lbs.), but they can be extremely dangerous if not carefully trained and controlled; severe ban-dog attacks are not uncommon.

casuistry

"…a dialogue in verse between two poets, who questioned each other on some refined points of love's casuistry."

Casuistry is a process of reasoning that seeks to resolve moral problems by extracting abstract rules from a particular case, and applying those rules to new instances. This method occurs in applied ethics and the law. The term is also used pejoratively to criticize the use of clever but unsound reasoning,

especially in relation to ethical questions. Casuistry could also be called rationalization.

civility

In the training of a knight, young men were "assiduously engaged in acquiring all those refinements of civility which formed what was in that age called courtesy."

Civility is courteous behavior, politeness. It can also be called that state of society in which the relations and duties of a citizen are recognized and obeyed, a state of civilization.

Civility comes from the Latin word *civilis*, meaning "relating to public life, befitting a citizen," in other words, being respectful and nice to everyone. When you show civility, you use kindness and good manners.

courtesy

Courtesy is very nearly a synonym for civility, except for these additional meanings:

—indulgence despite facts: "hills called mountains by courtesy only"
—agency, means, generosity: "through the courtesy of "
—performed as a courtesy: "made a courtesy call on the ambassador"

fast

"After undergoing a severe fast, and spending whole nights in prayer, the candidate (for knighthood) confessed, and received the sacrament."

To fast means to eat sparingly or abstain from food for a certain period. Such periods of self-denial usually happen because of religious discipline or the desire to lose weight.

forage

As a noun, the word forage means the plant material serving as food for livestock. As a verb, it means the act of looking or searching for food or provisions. The verb forage often describes animals searching for food, but it can also be applied to people.

heathen

Heathen is an old-fashioned word used to describe people who are irreligious or that do not practice Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. It is also sometimes used disapprovingly of someone who is not cultured; this use is also dated.

Pagan has meanings identical to those of heathen; in those uses it too is dated. Additionally, pagan has literary use referring to a nonreligious person who delights in sensual pleasures and material goods. The origins of heathen and pagan are semantically similar. Heathen likely comes from a term for a country inhabitant—in particular, a "heath dweller." The Latin source of pagan, *paganus*, originally meant "country dweller" or "civilian."

ich dien

"Ich dien" (German for "I serve") is the motto of the Prince of Wales, adopted with the crest of ostrich feathers after the battle of Crécy (1346), from John of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia, who was killed in the battle. The heraldic badge consists of three white ostrich feathers encircled by a gold coronet. As well as being used in royal heraldry, the feathers are sometimes used to symbolize Wales itself, particularly in the Welsh rugby union and Welsh regiments of the British Army.

infidel

An infidel is an unbeliever with respect to a particular religion, especially Christianity or Islam — or one who has no religious beliefs. It may also be used to describe one who doubts or rejects a particular doctrine, system, or principle.

Similar in meaning to "heathen," infidel comes to English from the Latin *infidelis*, which means "unfaithful."

knight-errant

A knight-errant is a knight, often portrayed in medieval romances, who wanders in search of adventures to prove his chivalry and exhibit his military skill, prowess, and generosity.

The character of the wandering knight existed in romantic literature as it developed during the late 12th century. However, the term "knight-errant"

came later; its first extant usage occurs in the 14th-century poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. A knight-errant typically performed all his deeds in the name of a lady, and invoked her name before performing an exploit.

In Don Quixote (1605), Miguel de Cervantes burlesqued the romances and their popularity. Tales of knight-errantry then fell out of fashion for two centuries, until they re-emerged in the form of the historical novel.

In the romances, the knight-errant's adventures frequently included greater foes than other knights, including giants, enchantresses, or dragons. Such knights may also gain help that is out of ordinary. Sir Ywain assisted a lion against a serpent, and was thereafter accompanied by it, becoming the Knight of the Lion. Other knights-errant have been assisted by wild men of the woods, as in Valentine and Orson, or, like Guillaume de Palerme, by wolves that were, in fact, enchanted princes.

licentious

To be licentious is to be lacking moral restraint, especially in sexual conduct. It can also mean to ignore accepted rules or standards, or to be abusive of freedom.

License and licentious come ultimately from the same word in Latin, *licentia*, whose meanings ranged from "freedom to act" to "unruly behavior, wantonness." The Latin noun was itself derived from the verb *licere* "to be permitted." To most of us, license means permission to drive a car and licentious means sexual wantonness, but there is considerable semantic overlap between the two words. Poetic license refers to deviation from a (usually) literary norm for some intended effect. The semantic range of license in English mirrors that of its Latin antecedent, suggesting either permission or transgression, depending upon the context.

Licentious, on the other hand, always implies excessive, transgressive freedom. What some might call a licentious senior citizen, others would simply refer to as "a dirty old man" (or woman).

mirth

Mirth is gladness and merriment, especially when expressed by laughter. Studies show that when human beings laugh, smile, or otherwise engage in mirthful activity, our brains release hormones that help them live longer. Mirth can be foolish, but it's good for you.

peer

A peer is one that is of equal standing with another, for example, one belonging to the same societal group. This can be especially based on age, grade, or status. The word may also refer to a member of one of the five ranks (duke, marquess, earl, viscount, or baron) of the British peerage, as in "peer of the realm."

ransack

To ransack means to search through (something) thoroughly and often roughly. The word is often applied to the act of going through a place stealing valuables and causing disarray and damage.

Ransack carries the image of a house being roughly disarranged, as might happen when you are frantically searching for something. This is appropriate given the word's origin. Ransack comes, via Middle English, from the Old Norse word *rannsaka*: the *rann* in rannsaka means "house." But our modern use of the word isn't restricted to houses. You can ransack a drawer, a suitcase, or even (by hurriedly looking through it) the contents of a book. Ransack also inspired another English word related to disorder and unsteadiness. A now-obsolete form of ransack, "ransackle," gave us the adjective ramshackle, meaning "rickety" or "carelessly or loosely constructed."

redoubted

Redoubted means formidable, dreaded, respected, or renowned.

Based on its spelling, you might think that redoubt shares its origin with words such as doubt and redoubtable, both of which come from the Latin verb *dubitare*, meaning "to be in doubt." But that's not the case. Redoubt actually comes to us from a Latin verb, reducere, meaning "to lead back," the same root that gives us reduce. How that "b" ended up in redoubt is a lingering question, but some etymologists have posited that the word might have been conflated with another redoubt—a now-archaic verb meaning "to regard with awe, dismay, or dread" which, unlike its twin, does indubitably come from *dubitare*.

romance

Romance can mean a love affair, a literary genre, a language group, or a musical style. It can also mean an ardent emotional attachment to or involvement with a person or activity.

The word romance comes from Roman, and first meant a story translated into French from Latin (the common language of old Rome), usually about the amorous adventures of chivalrous knights, which is how romances came to be associated with love stories. The Romance languages are those derived from Latin. If you romance a tale, you exaggerate it, and if you romance a person, you're making advances.

rose-noble

A rose-noble is an English gold coin first issued by Edward IV in 1465 in place of the debased noble of Henry IV and bearing the design of the noble with a rose added. It's also called a rial or ryal.

sacrament

A sacrament is a religious sign or symbol, especially associated with Christian churches, in which a sacred or spiritual power is believed to be transmitted through material elements viewed as channels of divine grace.

The Latin word *sacramentum* was used in Roman law to describe a legal sanction in which a man placed his life or property in the hands of the supernatural powers that upheld justice and honored solemn contracts. It later became an oath of allegiance taken by soldiers to their commander when embarking on a new campaign, sworn in a sacred place and using a formula having a religious connotation.

sapper

A sapper, in the sense first used by the French military, was one who dug trenches to allow besieging forces to advance towards the enemy defensive works over ground that is under the defenders' musket or artillery fire. It derives from the French verb saper (to undermine, to dig under a wall or building to cause its collapse). This digging was referred to as sapping the enemy fortifications. Saps were excavated by brigades of trained sappers or instructed troops. When an army was defending a fortress with cannons, they had an obvious height and therefore range advantage over the attacker's guns. The attacking army's artillery had to be brought forward, under fire, so as to facilitate effective counter-battery fire.

Broadly speaking, sappers were originally experts at demolishing or otherwise overcoming or bypassing fortification systems. Nowadays, sappers are military engineers who also lay, detect, and disarm mines.

sirventes

"Their (poets) favorite pieces were Sirventes (satirical pieces)…"

Sirventes is French, from Occitan *sirventes*, literally meaning servant's song or service song. In music, a service-song (as distinct from a love-song) is a kind of song composed by the trouvères and troubadours of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, usually to satirize the faults and vices of the great and of the society of their day.

The verses were always opinionated, being either highly complimentary or, more often, oozing with vitriol. However, these features are not unique to the sirventes, so a piece can be positively identified as one only if its nature is explicitly stated in the text (which it often is) or the original piece it is based on has been preserved (which is also often the case: for a parody to work, it had to target a recognizable, therefore widely known, piece).

solemn

"The ceremonies of initiation were particularly solemn."

Solemn means serious and dignified, behaving with dignified restraint or earnestness. The adjective solemn comes from the Latin *sollemnis*, which means formal or ceremonial. You can still use it to describe a ceremony or event, but it's also a good word for talking about someone who's serious and sincere and maybe lacks a sense of humor about certain things.

tenson

"…tensons, which were a sort of dialogue in verse between two poets, who questioned each other on some refined points of love's casuistry."

A tenson is a lyric poem of dispute composed by Provençal troubadours in which two opponents speak alternate stanzas, lines, or groups of lines usually identical in structure. In some cases, these debates were imaginary, and both sides of the issue were composed by the same person. The tenson was a specific form of *débat*, a kind of medieval poetic contest.

throw the bar

"Now Robin Hood had instituted a day of mirth for himself and all his companions, and wagers were laid amongst them who should exceed at this exercise and who at that; some did contend who should jump farthest, some who should throw the bar, some who should be swiftest afoot…"

"Bar" is defined as a relatively long, straight, rigid piece of solid material used as a fastener, support, barrier, or structural or mechanical member. Synonyms are: staff, stick, stave, and crosier (a staff with a crook at the end).

Beyond that definition of "bar," we could find no description or explanation of "throwing the bar." But it was obviously something people did for fun and we're all for that.

triumph

"The shepherds, in their gratitude to Tristram, bore him in triumph to King Mark to have him bestow on him a suitable reward."

To triumph is to be victorious or successful. It also means to rejoice over a victory or to receive honors after a victory. It was used especially of generals in ancient Rome.

Triumph can be a noun or a verb, so you can have a triumph after the big game when you triumph over your opponents. Either way, it's a way to rejoice and a reason to whoop it up. The word comes from the Latin *triumphus* which is an "achievement, success, procession for a victorious general or admiral." Fittingly, a Triumph is also the name of a motorcycle, a cool car, and a hard rockin' band from Canada.

vanquish

To vanquish is to be the complete and total winner, to overpower and overcome, whether in a contest, a race, or a war. It generally suggests a total trouncing, to the point of humiliation — or worse — for the loser.

Sometimes words for the same thing are effective in different ways because they offer different levels of meaning. For example, in a game, you can simply win, or you can vanquish your opponent. The former is enough, but the latter makes that defeat sound so much worse, like a total rout.

We learned a very odd thing about the word vanquish. It can also be used as a noun and means a disease in sheep, in which they pine away.

victor

The victor is the winner of a contest, usually one that requires physical skills or strength, like in battle or sports. Calling someone the victor implies that he or she triumphed in a difficult competition. The origin of the noun victor is in the Latin word *vincere*, meaning "conquer."

win one's spurs

"At Crecy the Black Prince won his spurs."

To win one's spurs is to prove one's skill in a particular area and earn distinction or a good position as a result.

In the Middle Ages a knight who had won his spurs had attained knighthood by performing an act of bravery: a pair of gilt spurs were the distinguishing mark of a knight.

FOOD for THOUGHT

(quotes from the book)

It often happens that fortune in war and love turns out more favorable and wonderful than could have been hoped for or expected.

"Throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence and judge the prize."
(Milton)

"Of Arthur, who, to upper light restored, with that terrific sword,
Which yet he brandishes for future war,
Shall lift his country's fame above the polar star?"
(Wordsworth)

It is an additional recommendation of our subject (*mythology*), that it tends to cherish in our minds the idea of the source from which we sprung.

The tales, though not to be trusted for their facts, are worthy of all credit as pictures of manners; and it is beginning to be held that the manners and modes of thinking of an age are a more important part of its history than the conflicts of its peoples, generally leading to no result.

They say he is already in the forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England... and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world. (from *As You Like It*)

"But my chief spite lies against the clergy, who have in these days great power."
(Robin Hood)

The Decameron

The Decameron (sometimes nicknamed the Human comedy) is a collection of short stories by the 14th-century Italian author Giovanni Boccaccio. The book is structured as a frame story containing 100 tales told by a group of seven young women and three young men. They shelter in a secluded villa just outside Florence in order to escape the Black Death, a plague afflicting the city. This storytelling occupies 10 days; hence, the title of the book, *Decameron*, or "Ten Days' Work." Each day ends with a canzone (song), some of which represent Boccaccio's finest poetry. The story plots include fantasy adventures, sweet romances, macabre horror tales, morality stories, bawdy jokes, and innumerable examples of human passion, jealousy, and folly. In addition to its literary value and widespread influence (for example, on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*), it provides a document of life at the time. Written in the vernacular of the Florentine language, it is considered a masterpiece of early Italian prose and has recently appeared on-screen as a movie and as a television series.

About the author:
Giovanni Boccaccio (1313 – 1375) was an Italian writer, poet, scholar, and one of the most important figures in the European literary world of the fourteenth century. Some scholars define him as the greatest European prose writer of his time, a versatile author who had the courage to experiment.

His most notable works are *The Decameron* and *On Famous Women*. He is particularly noted for his realistic dialogue, which differed from that of his contemporaries, who usually followed formulaic models for character and plot. Boccaccio is considered one of the "Three Crowns" of Italian literature along with Dante Alighieri and Petrarch. He is remembered for being one of the precursors of humanism, of which he helped lay the foundations in the city of Florence.

About the translator:
Giovanni Florio (1552 – 1625), known as John Florio, was an English linguist, poet, writer, translator, lexicographer, and royal language tutor at the Court of James I. He is recognized as the most important Renaissance humanist in England. Florio contributed 1,149 words to the English language, placing third after Chaucer (2,012 words) and Shakespeare (1,969 words).

About the stories:
On ten different days, ten people take turns telling stories, and one person performs a song to close the day. The stories are allegories, offering a second

meaning beneath the surface story and this may be moral, political, social or satiric.

The setting gives the illusion of an idyllic pastoral paradise. It is a magical, natural world of flowers, singing birds, and cool streams (plus palatial sleeping quarters, elegant meals, and fine wine), which appears all the brighter against the dark background of the city, with its death, disease, destruction, and disorder.

The three major themes involve love, fortune, and intelligence, with the overriding theme being the power of love. Most of the stories involve some form of love, with romantic passion the most frequent form. Boccaccio regards passionate love as a powerful force outside the lover's control. He frequently plays love off against the other two major themes, as when young lovers are separated by Fortune, or when shrewd women use their intelligence to secure love. Other themes involve clerical hypocrisy, vice, and folly, with hypocrisy being a common strategy for securing love and fortune.

Boccaccio's plots range from fantastic adventure tales to short bawdy jokes, with most known genres of popular fiction in between. The tales live on in the plots of countless stage plays, movies, television sitcoms and romcoms, and all genres of fantasy fiction.

He also expressed his compassion for women deprived of free speech and social liberty, confined to their homes and, at times, lovesick. He contrasted this life with that of the men free to enjoy hunting, fishing, riding, and falconry.

Recurring plots of the stories include mocking the lust and greed of the clergy; female lust and ambition on a par with male lust and ambition; tensions in Italian society between the new wealthy commercial class and noble families; and the perils and adventures of traveling merchants. The Catholic Church, priests, and religious belief become the satirical source of comedy throughout. *The Decameron's* overtly anti-clerical stances frequently brought the work into conflict with the Catholic Church.

The Song from Day Eight

Panfilo sings about love as salvation.

Love, I found such felicity,
And joy, in thy captivity,
As I before did never prove,
And thought me happy, being in Love.

Comfort abounding in my heart,
Joy and Delight
In soul and spright
I did possess in every part;
O Sovereign Love by thee.
Thy Sacred fires,
Fed my desires, And still aspires,
Thy happy thrall to be.

Love, I found such felicity,
And joy, in thy captivity,
As I before did never prove,
And thought me happy, being in Love.

My Song wants power to relate,
The sweets of mind
Which I did find
In that most blissful state,
O Sovereign Love by thee.
No sad despair, Or killing care
Could me prepare;
Still thou didst comfort me.

Love, I found such felicity,
And joy, in thy captivity,
As I before did never prove,
And thought me happy, being in Love.

I hate all such as do complain,
Blaspheming thee
With Cruelty,
And sleights of coy disdain.
O So reign Love; to me
Thou has been kind:
If others find
Thee worse inclined,
Yet I will honor thee.

Love, I found such felicity,
And joy in thy Captivity:
As I before did never prove,
But thought me happy, being in Love.

From the introduction to the fifth day,
a few paragraphs describing the setting

Now began the Sun to dart forth his golden beams, when Madam Fiammetta (incited by the sweet singing Birds which, since the break of day, sat merrily chanting on the trees) arose from her bed: as all the other Ladies likewise did, and the three young Gentlemen, descending down into the fields, where they walked in a gentle pace on the green grass, until the Sun were risen a little higher. On many pleasant matters they conferred together, as they walked in several companies, till at length the Queen, finding the heat to enlarge itself strongly, returned back to the Castle; where when they were all arrived, she commanded, that after this morning's walking, their stomachs should be refreshed with wholesome Wines, as also divers sorts of banqueting stuff.

Afterward, they all repaired into the Garden, not departing thence till the hour of dinner was come: at which time, the Master of the household, having prepared every thing in decent readiness, after a solemn song was sung, by order from the Queen, they were seated.

When they had dined, to their own liking and contentment, they began (in continuation of their former order) to exercise divers dances, and afterward voices to their instruments, and many pretty Madrigals and Roundelays.

A few notes about dance:
Dancing was an important courtly pastime during the medieval era, almost always took place after supper or feasting, and could often continue until late in the night. It was considered an art form and required grace, poise, and elegance. Ballroom dances, such as the pavane and the galliard, were popular among the noble class and were often performed at formal events and celebrations.

Medieval dance was just as varied as its music. Courtly dances, usually held indoors, were often elegant and refined, with precise movements and instructions. Folk dances, lively and unrestrained, often performed in circles or lines, would have taken place outdoors. These dances included the branle and carole.

The minstrel tradition played a significant role in medieval music and dance. Minstrels were traveling musicians and entertainers who would perform at feasts, fairs, and other social gatherings. They were skilled at playing multiple instruments and singing a variety of songs. Minstrels also served as storytellers, regaling their audiences with tales of adventure and romance.

Noble dancers would have been required to make measured and moderate

movements in a processional manner, as anything too excessive or even too limited could be seen as unnatural or ugly. They may have recruited dancing masters to teach them. Moderation in movement was seen as a sign of a virtuous soul and in the highly pious medieval period no one wanted to be seen as sinful.

What is now known as ballet had its beginnings in Italian court festivals when women frequently played the parts of men. The church generally frowned upon dance although there was often dancing at folk festivals.

The important place of women in dance can be traced back to the origins of civilization. Cave paintings, Egyptian frescos, Indian statuettes, ancient Greek and Roman art and records of court traditions in China and Japan all testify to the important role women played in ritual and religious dancing.

From *The Decameron*
The First Day, the Second Novel
(This story is essentially a searing satirical critique of the Catholic Church in Rome.)

There lived a wealthy Merchant in Paris, being a Mercer, or seller of Silks, named Jehannot de Chevigny, a man of faithful, honest, and upright dealing, who held great affection and friendship with a very rich Jew named Abraham, that was a Merchant also, and a man of very direct conversation.

Jehannot, well noting the honesty and loyal dealing of this Jew, began to have a Religious kind of compassion in his soul, much pitying that a man so good in behavior, so wise and discreet in all his actions, should be in danger of perdition through want of Faith. In which regard, lovingly he began to entreat him, that he would leave the errors of his Jewish belief and follow the truth of Christianity, which he evidently saw (as being good and holy) daily to prosper and enlarge itself, whereas on the contrary, his (Jewish) profession decreased, and grew to nothing.

The Jew made answer, that he believed nothing to be so good and holy as the Jewish Religion and having been born therein, therein also he purposed to live and die, no matter whatsoever being able to remove him from that resolution. For all this stiff denial, Jehannot would not so give him over, but pursued him still day by day, reiterating continually his former speeches to him, delivering infinite excellent and pregnant reasons, that Merchants themselves were not ignorant, how far the Christian faith excelled the Jewish falsehoods. And albeit the Jew was a very learned man in his own Law, yet notwithstanding the entire amity he bore to Jehannot, or (perhaps) his words fortified by the

blessed Spirit, were so prevalent with him, that the Jew felt a pleasing apprehension in them, though as yet his obstinacy stood far off from Conversion. But as he thus continued strong in opinion, so Jehannot left not hourly to labor him, insomuch that the Jew being conquered by such earnest and continual importunity, one day spoke to Jehannot, saying,

"My worthy friend Jehannot, thou art extremely desirous that I should convert to Christianity, and I am well contented to do it, only upon this condition: That first I will journey to Rome, to see him whom thou sayest is God's general Vicar here on earth, and to consider on the course of his life and manners, and likewise of his College of Cardinals. If he and they do appear such men to me, as thy speeches affirm them to be, and thereby I may comprehend that thy Faith and Religion is better than mine, as with no mean pains thou endevorest to persuade me, I will become a Christian as thou art, but if I find it otherwise, I will continue as I am, a Jew."

Jehannot, hearing these words, became exceeding sorrowful, and said within himself; I have lost all the pains which I did think to be well employed, as hoping to have this man converted here. For, if he go to the Court of Rome, and behold there the wickedness of the Priests' lives, farewell all hope in me of ever seeing him to become a Christian. But rather, were he already a Christian, without all question, he would turn a Jew. And so going nearer to Abraham, he said, "Alas my loving friend, why shouldst thou undertake such a tedious travel, and so great a charge, as thy journey from hence to Rome will cost thee?"

"Consider, that to a rich man (as thou art) travel by land or Sea is full of infinite dangers. Dost thou not think, that here are Religious men enough, who will gladly bestow Baptism upon thee? To me therefore it plainly appeareth, that such a voyage is to no purpose. If thou standest upon any doubt or scruple concerning the faith whereto I wish thee, where canst thou desire conference with greater Doctors, or men more learned in all respects, than this famous City doth afford thee, to resolve thee in any questionable case? Thou must think, that the Prelates are such there, as here thou seest them to be, and yet they must needs be in much better condition at Rome, because they are near to the principal Pastor. And therefore, if thou wilt credit my counsel, reserve this journey to some time more convenient, when the Jubilee of general Pardon happeneth, and then (perchance) I will bear thee company, and go along with thee as in vowed Pilgrimage."

Whereto the Jew replied: "I believe, Jehannot, that all which thou hast said may be so. But, to make short with thee, I am fully determined (if thou wouldst have me a Christian, as thou instantly urgest me to be) to go thither, for otherwise, I will continue as I am."

Jehannot, perceiving his settled purpose, said: "Go then in God's name." But persuaded himself, that he would never become a Christian, after he had once seen the Court of Rome. Nevertheless, he counted his labor not altogether lost, in regard he bestowed it to a good end, and honest intentions are to be commended.

The Jew mounted on horseback and made no lingering in his journey to Rome, where being arrived, he was very honorably entertained by other Jews dwelling in Rome.

And during the time of his abiding there (without revealing to any one the reason of his coming thither) very heedfully he observed the manner of the Pope's life, of the Cardinals, Prelates, and all the Courtiers. And being a man very discreet and judicious, he apparently perceived, both by his own eye, and further information of friends, that from the highest to the lowest (without any restraint, remorse of conscience, shame, or fear of punishment) all sinned in abominable luxury, and not naturally only, but in foul Sodomy, so that the credit of Strumpets and Boys was not small, and yet might be too easily obtained.

Moreover, drunkards, belly-Gods, and servants of the paunch, more than of anything else (even like brutish beasts after their luxury) were everywhere to be met withall. And upon further observation, he saw all men so covetous and greedy of Coin, that everything was bought and sold for ready money, not only the blood of men, but (in plain terms) the faith of Christians, yea, and matters of divinest qualities, how, or to whomsoever appertaining, were it for Sacrifices or Benefices, whereof was made no mean merchandise, and more Brokers were there to be found (than in Paris attending upon all Trades) of manifest Simony (trafficking for money in spiritual things), under the nice name of Negotiation, and for gluttony, not sustenance: even as if God had not known the signification of vocables (meaningless words), nor the intentions of wicked hearts, but would suffer himself to be deceived by the outward names of things, as wretched men commonly use to do.

These things and many more (fitter for silence than for publication) were so deeply displeasing to the Jew, being a most sober and modest man, that he had soon seen enough, resolving on his return to Paris, which very speedily he performed. And when Jehannot heard of his arrival, crediting much rather other news from him, than ever to see him a converted Christian, he went to welcome him, and kindly they feasted one another. After some few days of resting, Jehannot demanded of him what he thought of our holy Father the Pope and his Cardinals, and generally of all the other Courtiers? Whereto the Jew readily answered, "It is strange, Jehannot, that God should give them so much as he doth. For I will truly tell thee, that if I had been able to consider all those things, which there I have both heard and seen, I could then have

resolved myself, never to have found in any Priest either sanctity, devotion, good work, example of honest life, or any good thing else beside. But if a man desire to see luxury, avarice, gluttony, and such wicked things, yea, worse, if worse may be, and held in general estimation of all men, let him but go to Rome, which I think rather to be the forge of damnable actions, than any way leaning to grace or goodness. And, for ought I could perceive, methinks your chief Pastor, and (consequently) all the rest of his dependents, do strive so much as they may (with all their crafts of art and endeavor) to bring to nothing, or else to banish quite out of the world, Christian Religion, whereof they should be the support and foundation."

"But because I perceive that their wicked intent will never come to pass, but contrariwise, that your faith enlargeth itself, shining every day much more clear and splendid, I gather thereby evidently, that the blessed Spirit is the true ground and defense thereof, as being more true and holy then any other. In which respect, whereas I stood stiff and obstinate against the good admonitions, and never minded to become a Christian: now I freely open my heart unto thee, that nothing in the world can or shall hinder me, but I will be a Christian, as thou art. Let us therefore presently go to the Church, and there (according to the true custom of your holy faith) help me to be baptized."

Jehannot, who expected a far contrary conclusion then this, hearing him speak it with such constancy, was the very gladdest man in the world, and went with him to the Church of Notre Dame in Paris, where he requested the Priests there abiding, to bestow baptism on Abraham, which they joyfully did, hearing him so earnestly to desire it. Jehannot was his Godfather, and named him John, and afterward, by learned Divines he was more fully instructed in the grounds of our faith; wherein he grew of great understanding, and led a very virtuous life.

WORDS and PHRASES

allure

To "allure" means to tempt, captivate, or charm someone by offering something desirable. The figurative sense of "to lure on as with a moving bait, entice, allure" is from the 1560s. In Old French, it meant "to attract or captivate, to train, as a falcon to hunt by casting a lure or decoy." The word is related to "lure," from the German word *luder* meaning "bait." A well-made lure is so alluring to a fish that it won't notice the hook. As a noun, allure (or allurements) means something powerfully attractive and tempting.

bourdon

The word "bourdon" has a number of meanings:
—the drone pipe of a bagpipe
—the bass string, as of a violin or hurdy-gurdy
—the lowest-pitched stop of an organ or bell of a carillon
—the burden or bass of a melody (archaic)
—a staff used by pilgrims in the middle ages
—a plain thick silver wand used as a badge of office
—a lance used in the joust
—a bumblebee

A bumblebee? Well, the word is a compound of "bumble" and "bee"—'bumble' meaning to hum, buzz, or drone. The generic name *Bombus* is derived from the Latin word for a buzzing or humming sound.

bower

The meaning of the word "bower" has changed somewhat over the years. Originally, it meant an attractive rustic cottage, a dwelling. A few centuries later, it might mean a lady's personal hideaway within a medieval castle, her private apartment. Today, it usually means a shelter made with boughs or twining plants, an arbor or a shady recess. Bower also features in the name of bowerbirds, species native to Australia, New Guinea, and nearby islands. The males build elaborate structures using twigs, moss, and other plant materials to woo potential mates during courtship.

canzonnetta

In music, a "canzonetta" is a popular Italian vocal composition. In its earliest form, the canzonetta was closely related to the villanella. The songs were always secular, and generally involved pastoral, irreverent, or erotic subjects. The rhyme and stanza schemes of the poems varied but always included a final "punch line." It was fun to sing, hugely popular, and quickly caught on throughout Italy, paralleling the madrigal, with which it later began to interact.

cornemuse

A cornemuse is a wind instrument nearly identical with the bagpipe.

The bagpipe consists of a reed melody pipe and from one to five drones with

air supplied continuously by a bag held under the player's arm to provide a constant pressure. Melodies are played on the finger holes of the melody pipe, or chanter, while the remaining pipes, or drones, sound single notes. Bagpipes existed by circa 100 CE. The early bag was an animal bladder or a nearly whole sheepskin or goatskin.

cunning

Cunning means clever and good at deceiving people in order to get what you want. It can describe behavior, actions, objects or people that are clever but dishonest and unfair. Lastly, it can mean delicately pleasing, pretty or cute.

In the early 14th century, the word meant "learned, skillful, possessing knowledge." But by the latter part of that century, it was also meant in the sense of "skillfully deceitful, characterized by crafty ingenuity." is probably by late 14c.

dream

A "dream" can be:
—images, ideas, and emotions occurring involuntarily in the mind during sleep
—a daydream, a reverie
—a trance: "wandering around in a dream"
—something notable for its beauty or excellence: "the new car is a dream"
— a strongly desired goal or purpose
—something ideal: "a meal that was a gourmet's dream"

In Old English, dream meant joy, noisy merriment, or music. This meaning faded out of use after early Middle English.

The experts have failed to prove that Old English "dream" is the source of the modern word for "sleeping vision," despite being identical in form. Perhaps the meaning of the word changed dramatically, or "vision" was an unrecorded secondary Old English meaning of dream, or there are two words here.

Dream in the sense of "that which is presented to the mind by the imaginative faculty, though not in sleep" is from the 1580s. The meaning "ideal or aspiration" is from 1931, from the earlier sense of "something of dream-like beauty or charm" (1888). The notion of "ideal" is behind dream girl (1850).

folly

"Folly" can be defined as lack of normal prudence, tragically foolish action, or an unprofitable undertaking. It also describes a small picturesque building erected as a decoration.

Geneway Pyrates

"Geneway" appears often in *The Decameron*, and it appears to be one of the ways to spell "Genoa," which is believed to originate from the Latin word "Genua." An etymological source says, "Adjective forms in English included Middle English Genoway (also in plural, Janeways), c. 1400, from Italian Genovese."

The word "pyrate" is easy to translate as "pirate." One source politely describes the Genoese as "renowned for their skilled sailors and navigators, cultivated trade links that stretched across the Mediterranean and beyond." This means, of course, that there were a lot of pirates operating out of that city. Pirates shaped the history of the Mediterranean for 3000 years between 1000BCE and the 19th century CE.

Around the 14th century, Genoa was also credited with the invention of blue jeans. Genoa's jean fabric was a fustian textile of "medium quality and of reasonable cost," very similar to cotton corduroy for which Genoa was famous, and was "used for work clothes in general." The Genoese navy equipped its sailors with jeans, as they needed a fabric which could be worn wet or dry.

gripple

"Gripple" means griping, greedy, covetous, and tenacious. For example, "… called Herminio the covetous Mizer, a nickname very notably agreeing with his gripple nature."

hermit

A hermit is a person who lives alone and has a simple way of life. The word comes from an ancient Greek word meaning, "person of the desert."

A hermit is also a cookie made with molasses, raisins, and nuts.

This is apparently two-for-one day in the word department. Not only can you be a hermit, you can eat one, too.

hypocrisy

"Hypocrisy" is the practice of professing beliefs, feelings, or virtues that one does not have, a concealment of one's real character, disposition, or motives, and especially, the assuming of false appearance of virtue or religion. The word entered the English language c. 1200 with the meaning "the sin of pretending to virtue or goodness." The word comes from the Greek word *hypokrisis*, which means acting on a stage or dissembling.

induction

In this book, "induction" is used to mean a preface, prologue, or introduction, as the author leads us into the next section. The broader meaning is the act or process of inducing or bringing about.

madrigal

A madrigal is a short lyrical poem in a strict poetic form, often about love and suitable for being set to music. It's also a secular musical composition for two or three unaccompanied voices, developed in Italy in the late 1200s and early 1300s.

mockery

"Mockery" has several meanings:
—insulting or contemptuous action or speech
—a counterfeit appearance, a bad imitation, delusion, or sham
—an insincere, contemptible, or impertinent imitation
—something ridiculously or impudently unsuitable
—laughing at someone in an unkind way

nightingale

A nightingale is a thrush, a small, plain, brown and gray songbird, noted for the sweet song of the male, most often heard at night. In Japanese, "nightingale floor" is said to be the term for boards that creak when you walk on them.

prat

"Prat" is another word for "buttocks." It's also used to describe a person who is incompetent and stupid as well as a cunning or mischievous trick.

prodigality

Prodigality means extravagance in expenditure, particularly of money. It can also mean lavish generosity and abundance as opposed to frugality, economy, and parsimony.

quicken

To "quicken" means to revive or animate something or the process of becoming alive. It can also mean stimulation of an emotion. It's commonly used to mean the first motion of the fetus in the womb felt by the mother, occurring usually about the middle of the term of pregnancy. It has been popularly supposed to be due to the fetus becoming possessed of independent life.

rash

In the late 14th century, "rash" meant nimble, quick, or vigorous, perhaps from a survival of Old English *-resc* (as in *ligresc* "flash of lightning"). For example, to cook too rapidly, to burn from haste, as in, "the beef has been rashed in the roasting."

Today, that meaning has evolved to reckless, "acting with ill-considered haste or boldness." Currently, it also means a more or less extensive eruption on the skin or an outbreak of many instances within a brief period, such as "a rash of burglaries."

silly

"Silly" is another word with more than one meaning.
—foolish, showing a lack of good judgment or common sense
—being frivolous, playfully lighthearted and amusing, even ridiculous
—semiconscious or dazed: "He was knocked silly by the impact."
—to an extreme degree: "He was scared silly."

An archaic meaning of silly is "rustic or plain."
The silly buckets on the deck,

That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.
(Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

An obsolete meaning is "humble, helpless, weak."

As a noun, silly simply means a foolish person. "But there," she told herself, "I am very likely a silly—meeting trouble half-way."

sin

A sin is the transgression of a religious or moral law, especially when deliberate. It can also be an offense against moral law, or an action that is felt to be highly reprehensible, such as wasting food.

A far weaker meaning is "an often serious shortcoming," which can jokingly apply to a harmless act like eating one dessert too many, or can be paired with another word to refer to a failing of one kind or another, as in "literary/ grammatical sins." The word "sinful" may also be found denoting activities which are quite enjoyable (although still possibly guilt-inducing), such as eating "a sinful dessert."

"Sin-eater" is attested from 1680s, meaning "one who, for pay, takes on the sins of a deceased person," typically by eating certain food in the presence of the corpse. To "live in sin" or cohabit without marriage, is from 1838. Ice hockey slang "sin bin" for penalty box is attested from 1950.

soldane

"Soldane" is an archaic word meaning "sultan." It's used as a nickname for someone who behaved in an outlandish or autocratic manner.

stomach

In biology, the noun "stomach" is part of the digestive tract of vertebrates. It can also mean inclination or desire. "He had no stomach for an argument." As a verb, it means to bear, to put up with, as in, "He couldn't stomach politics or raw onions."

violl de gamba

The "violl de gamba" is any one of a family of bowed, fretted, and stringed instruments with hollow wooden bodies and pegboxes where the tension on the strings can be increased or decreased to adjust the pitch of each of the strings. All members of the viol family are played upright, held between the legs like a modern cello, hence the Italian name *viola da gamba* (viol for the leg). This distinguishes the viol from the modern violin family, the *viola da braccio* (viol for the arm).

FOOD for THOUGHT
(quotes from the book)

BEING on a day in company, (very little differing in quality from himself) he chanced to say that he had been at such good wine, as God himself did never drink better.

THE King had more mind to the fair Lady Marques, than any meat that stood on the Table. Nevertheless, observing each service after other, and that all the Viands (though variously cooked, and in divers kinds) were nothing else but Hens only, he began to wonder; and so much the rather, because he knew the Country to be of such quality, that it afforded all plenty both of Fowls and Venison. Besides, after the time of his coming was heard, they had respite enough, both for hawking and hunting, and therefore it increased his marvel the more, that nothing was provided for him but Hens only: wherein to be the better resolved, turning a merry countenance to the Lady, thus he spoke.

"Madam, are Hens only bred in this Country, and no Cocks?"

The Lady Marquesse, very well understanding his demand, which fitted her with an apt opportunity to thwart his idle hope, and defend her own honor; boldly returned the King this answer. "Not so my Lord, but women and wives, howsoever they differ in garments and graces one from another; yet notwithstanding, they are all here as they be in other places.

The Medieval Art Scene

The Medieval period covers an immense time span of more than a thousand years, between the fall of the Roman Empire around the 4th century CE and the Renaissance. It was labeled as the "dark ages" by Petrarch, a 14th century poet who revered the previous Classical period. But today, Medieval art is seen as a rich source for what it tells us about the changing fashions, religions, and the emergence of newer ideas and materials. Medieval artists also produced some incredibly beautiful works.

The Medieval age saw Christianity come to dominate progressive European thinking. It saw the rise of universities, the rule of civil law, and many different versions of religious reform. The visual arts, so vital during a period when literacy was reserved for the elite classes, became a key instrument of religious education.

This fascinating artistic period includes painted decorations from the catacombs in Rome, grand Byzantine monuments such as the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, famed mosaics in Ravenna, and illuminated manuscripts such as the Book of Kells. It also includes sculpture, stained glass, and treasuries of enamels, jewelry, and many other arts.

Art Time Line

Early Christian Art (260 — 525)
Christians during this period often faced religious persecution, resulting in clandestine art such as murals and symbols in underground tombs. Major art forms were frescoes, mosaic art, illuminated manuscripts, and basilica churches. The individuality of portraits, a great strength of Roman art, declined sharply, and figures were much less realistic.

Migration Period (300 — 900)
The migration of various tribes in Europe following the collapse of the Roman Empire influenced art and culture. Pagan migratory groups used an elaborate decorative style for utilitarian objects and jewelry, often featuring abstract carvings of animal motifs. Northern groups such as the Vikings and the Saxons have left behind a rich legacy in pottery, textiles, woodwork, and metalwork.

Anglo-Saxon art (400 — 1066)
Angles and Saxons arrived in England from Denmark and took over control of vast areas of England. Irish monks arrived, bringing ancient Celtic traditions. The animal patterns and bright colors favored by the Anglo-Saxons interlaced with the scrolls and spirals of the Celtic tradition. This resulted in an elaborate decorative style in metal and ivory utilitarian objects, dominated by carvings of abstract animal motifs. The period is also renowned for its carpets, illustrated manuscripts, and large, high crosses made of stone.

Visigothic art (415 — 711)
The Visigoths were a Christian Germanic people that invaded the Roman Empire between the 3rd and 5th centuries. Their art was a mixture of local Roman traditions, Byzantine influences and the effect of their own metalworking techniques. It includes metal jewelry, manuscript writing, and architecture distinguished by fine masonry work. The Visigoths were well known for their small metalwork pieces and jewelry which feature vibrantly colored gemstones and animal motifs, especially the eagle.

Viking art (700 — 1100)
Landing in Rome in 793, the Scandinavian Vikings were ruthless and brilliant military strategists who went on to conquer lands now part of Britain, Ireland, and France. Their iconic longboats, used for both travel and funerals, were works of art, with the prow and stern often carved to resemble snaking sea beasts. Viking artists favored Norse folklore, and used materials that could be carved or engraved, such as wood, metal, stone, ivory, and bone. They also produced textiles, tapestries, and jewelry in the form of brooches and pendants. According to the *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, "Women on the Scandinavian island of Gotland wore box brooches to secure their shawls at the collarbone; the brooches doubled as a container to hold small objects. They are decorated with tiny beasts, which inhabit the interlace patterns on the top and sides."

Byzantine art (300 — 1453, when the Roman Empire fell to the Ottoman Turks)
Byzantine art was characterized both by its dazzling appearance, with the extensive use of gold leaf and gems, and its complete lack of realism. Thus, paintings were flat, with no shadows, and with subjects who appeared very serious and grim. They were also represented without any sort of anchoring to the ground, making them appear to be floating. The most important figures in the narrative were depicted as taller and attired in more elaborate and colorful costumes than the rest. In architecture, the crowning achievement was the

Hagia Sophia (formerly the Cathedral of Saint Sophia). In mosaic paintings, it was "Emperor Justinian and His Retinue" in Ravenna. Byzantine silk textiles, often woven or embroidered with designs of both animal and human figures, were unexcelled.

This period is closely associated with the production of religious icons, which became enormously popular in Byzantine worship, both public and private. Eastern Christians considered icons a personal, intimate, and indispensable medium for spiritual transaction with holy figures. Some believers ascribed miracles and healing powers to them. However, between 726 and 787, a group backed by Emperor Leo III launched a campaign to destroy all icons in the belief that they were objects of worship and were thus linked to the veneration of false idols. The "Iconoclasts" were Christian fundamentalists who adhered to a literal translation of the Ten Commandments which forbids the making and worship of graven images. A second period of iconoclasm followed in 814 but ended in 842.

Merovingian art

The Christian Germanic tribe known as Merovingians reigned from the 5th to the mid-6th century over what is today a part of France. Their art was small and full of animal imagery. Items such as belt buckles, ornamental pins, and small medallions were highly detailed and created in the decorative style of cloisonné. In this process, small pieces of metal are soldered in strips with the spaces between filled in with enamel, gemstones and pieces of glass. Merovingians also built monasteries where monks created highly decorative illuminated manuscripts, favoring animal motifs. Many Merovingian treasures have come from excavated burial sites. Wealthy and important Merovingian lords were buried in ships filled with their treasures including jewelry, pottery, coins, and medallions.

Carolingian art (8th - 10th centuries)

Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman Emperor, ushered in the Carolingian era of Medieval history. The Carolingian Renaissance led to the preservation and reproduction of ancient texts and fostered new works in theology, philosophy, and literature. This period played a crucial role in preserving ancient knowledge and transmitting it to future generations. Key features of Carolingian art include illustrated manuscripts, Carolingian minuscule script, sculpture, and metal craftsmanship.

A small bronze sculpture from this period, measuring nine and a half inches high, depicts a man, wearing a crown and elegant royal robes, seated on his horse. Most historians believe the figure to be Charlemagne. This statue is modelled after an early Roman work featuring the Emperor Marcus Aurelius.

In both statues the emperors are depicted significantly larger than their horses, thereby emphasizing their power and their divine right to rule.

Ottonian art (951 — 1024)
In 936, Otto I (Otto the Great) took over Charlemagne's empire. Ottonian art, deeply religious in nature, coincided with a period of growth and reform in the church, and monasteries produced much fine art, including magnificent illuminated manuscripts, churches, monasteries, and sumptuous luxury objects intended for church interiors and treasuries. There had already been a gradual move towards realism and naturalism, but Ottonian art ventured into strong emotion. For example, in works showing the crucifixion, Ottonian art was apt to emphasize the agony of Christ's suffering.

Romanesque art (800 — 1150)
Romanesque architecture is dominated by massive structures with thick walls, vaulted roofs and round-headed windows and arches. Religious themes and an emphasis on symmetry and geometric shapes characterize the painting of this period. Taken to the shores of England by William the Conqueror, it became known as Norman art. Reliquaries, or holders for holy relics, were given prominence. Pilgrimage churches, those which housed the most important relics, were newly built or expanded from their original structures to accommodate larger crowds and religious visitors. Stained glass became a significant art form. Royalty and the higher clergy began to commission life-size effigies for tomb monuments.

Gothic Art (1150 - 1450)
Originating in France, Gothic art was characterized by the use of perspective, brighter colors, and more light and shadow, a strong move back towards realism. As cities began to expand, the rise in universities, trade, and creation led to the formation of an entirely new class who could now afford artistic commissions. This ultimately allowed Medieval artists to explore other than religious themes in their artworks. Print-making appeared.

Architecture was characterized by tall, airy cathedral structures, pointed arches, and stained glass windows, thus creating interior spaces that dwarfed worshippers and dazzled their senses. The years leading up to the Renaissance saw a maturity of the burgeoning concerns of the Middle Ages such as humanistic learning, naturalism, and individualism.

Individual artists were now being recognized and some had international reputations. Art collectors begin to appear. In some areas, tiny cheap religious woodcuts brought art into even the homes of peasants by the late 15th century.

The guild system was created.

Guilds

In the Middle Ages, craftsmen began to organize into craft guilds. A guild, like a modern trade union, provided extensive protection to members while largely eliminating the threat of outside competition.

Membership in a guild was achieved by following a proscribed course of training which began with an apprenticeship and resulted in, with diligence and luck, the member becoming a journeyman and, finally, a master craftsman. A guild created a monopoly within the craft, as membership in the craft guild was necessary to continue practicing.

Craft guilds established their own sets of guidelines and regulations. In general, these included the ban of unauthorized trading and fines for violations of pricing, and trade guidelines. Guilds were concerned with quality standards and sought to promote only the best within their crafts. They also cared for their members in times of need.

Over time, guilds developed to represent every possible trade. The organization of apothecaries (pharmacists today) is, perhaps, typical of the process. The website of *The Worshipful Society of Apothecaries* in London, England, provided the following information:
"The word 'apothecary' is derived from apotheca, meaning a place where wine, spices and herbs were stored. During the thirteenth century it came into use to describe a person who kept a stock of these commodities, which he sold from his shop or street stall.

"London apothecaries were originally members of another livery company, the Grocers, and together these tradesmen can be traced back to the Guild of Pepperers, an association formed in the City in 1180. By 1316, the Pepperers had been joined by the Spicers. The Pepperers subsequently became wholesale merchant traders dealing en gros (hence the word 'grocer') and in 1428 were incorporated as the Worshipful Company of Grocers.

"The trade in spicery and the development of pharmacy, on the other hand, became interdependent and led to the emergence of spicer-apothecaries. These members of the Grocers' Company had their shops in Bucklersbury where they stored and sold spices, confectionery, perfumes, spiced wines, herbs and drugs which they compounded and dispensed to the public."

Art Forms

Architecture

The major medieval constructions were churches and military fortifications, though examples of civic and domestic architecture can be found throughout Europe, adapting to local conditions. Nordic architecture, for example, is known for its functionality and simplicity. Harsh winters and salt spray influenced Nordic builders to create buildings which could stand up to climatic extremes.

Church architecture was elaborate in style and decorations. The main focus of the life of the community, churches often served as libraries, schools, and theaters where biblical stories were performed as plays. Arches, walls, and pillars were painted with rich colors and carved doorways had designs of animal faces, scallops, zigzags, or other decorative embellishments. Interiors were covered with bright tapestries, mosaics and paintings.

Castles began as fortresses, constructed of wood, and later of stone and brick, with a central hall for meetings and celebrations. They became the standard method of defense after the Norman victory at the battle of Hastings in 1066. The Normans constructed castles all over England to secure their new lands. Later, castles became royal residences. Many now are tourist destinations.

One of the most famous churches constructed during the medieval period was the Church of God's Holy Wisdom, now a mosque known as the Hagia Sophia. It is considered the epitome of Byzantine architecture and is said to have changed the history of architecture. The church was designed by the Greek geometers and built by the Byzantine emperor Constantine in 537 CE. Upon completion, it became the world's largest interior space.

Until the 15th century, no other building incorporated a floor space so vast under one roof. Four acres of golden glass cubes — millions of them — studded the interior to form a glittering canopy, each set at a subtly different angle to reflect the flicker of candles and oil lamps that illuminated nocturnal ceremonies. Forty thousand pounds of silver encrusted the sanctuary. Columns of purple porphyry and green marble were crowned by capitals so intricately carved that they seemed as fragile as lace. Blocks of marble, imported from as far away as Egypt and Italy, were cut into decorative panels that covered the walls of the church's entire vast interior. And then there is the astonishing dome, curving 110 feet from east to west, soaring 180 feet above the marble floor.

The symbolic power of the church continued after the Ottoman Turks conquered the Roman Empire in 1453. The Turks converted the church to a

mosque, renaming it the Hagia Sophia and adding the minarets. In 1935, the mosque was converted into a museum where Islamic and Christian art were displayed side-by-side. In 2020, the Hagia Sophia was converted back to a mosque.

Another famous structure is the *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1163-1345), one of the most recognizable cathedrals in the world, an exemplar of French Gothic architecture, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. *Notre-Dame* is thought to be one of the first buildings in the world to incorporate flying buttresses (arched exterior supports) to mitigate the dangers of their thinner, higher walls.

The move towards more ornate designs can be seen in the decorative rosette windows and pointed arches, and in the abundance of religious themed art that adorned the interior and exterior walls. One writer concluded that the magnificent facade of *Notre-Dame* "is so lucid and effortless in the arrangement of its porches and windows, so lithe and graceful the tracery of the gallery, that we forget the weight of this pile of stone and the whole structure seems to rise up before us like a mirage."

Unfortunately, the *Notre-Dame* suffered a fire on Aril 15, 2019, which destroyed the wooden spire, most of the wooden roof, and severely damaged the upper walls. Extensive destruction to the interior was prevented by the vaulted stone ceiling, which largely contained the burning roof as it collapsed. Many works of art and religious relics were moved to safety, but others suffered smoke damage, and some of the exterior art was damaged or destroyed. On 17 April, French president Emmanuel Macron set a five-year deadline to restore the cathedral. By September 2021, donors had contributed over 840 million Euros to the rebuilding effort.

Embroidery

The art of embroidery was considered among the most luxurious of the medieval period. Sumptuous fabrics in silk, gold and silver thread, often depicting religious or secular narrative scenes, were used in churches and for the clothing and homes of the wealthy.

Gothic period embroidery included delicate, elongated figural forms, flowing textiles and drapery, decorative and complex backgrounds with emphasis on details. Common themes are Christian saints and biblical stories, nature in the form of flora, fauna, fantastical beasts, and hunting, courtly love, architectural frames and structures, rich color, metallic gold and silver, and geometric patterns.

It is recorded that the future Charles V of France received the following in

1352 (at the age of 14): "A blue velvet surcot and a chaperon of pink and red scarlet. Both garments were embroidered all over with pearls encircled by gold thread. The pattern on the surcot — flowering shrubs surrounded by thistles being eaten by leopards in various poses — required several pounds of small pearls and 1,150 large pearls. The embroidery on the hood: 44 shrubs with large tufts of foliage and branches, a castle with maidens emerging on diverse beasts on the cape (mantle), and, along the hem, an arcade of 14 bays with capitals adorned by wild men on assorted beasts, requiring 1,340 large pearls, 200 smaller ones, and several pounds of little pearls."

"Everyone attests to the great needlecraft of English women in gold embroidery," wrote the Norman historian William of Poitiers. The term *Opus Anglicanum* was never actually used in England but often elsewhere in Europe to refer to the embroideries associated with English embroiderers, particularly in the period 1250-1350. At its height Opus Anglicanum seems to have represented an international status symbol, the epitome of magnificence suitable for ecclesiastical gifts, particularly to Popes. The technique may also be called needle painting when blending two or more colors or shades to mimic realistic appearance such as the folds and wrinkles of clothing, or the variegated appearance of foliage.

However, England's predominance in embroidery faded after 1350. It seems that only 19 *Opus Anglicanum* copes survive and it is estimated that each of them is likely to have taken about 50,000 hours of work. This would represent five to six years' work for four people.

While titled the Bayeux "Tapestry," this famous work is in fact an elaborately detailed and decorative work of embroidery. Measuring one foot eight inches high, the piece is nearly 230 feet long. Sewn into the linen scroll is a series of scenes depicting the history of England. These included the Norman victory over the Anglo-Saxons at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, which ultimately united present day France and England under a Norman king's rule. It also features scenes depicting the death of Anglo-Saxon King Edward the Confessor, his funeral and burial at Westminster Abbey, and the crowning of William as King, all key historical events that led up to the Battle of Hastings itself. The work features more than 600 figures, 37 buildings, 41 ships, and more than 200 animals.

Enamelwork

Enamelwork is a technique whereby pure metal (usually copper, but also gold, silver, and bronze) objects are given a glaze that is fused onto the surface by intense heat to create a brilliantly colored decorative effect. It is an art form noted for its hard and long-lasting glossy surface.

Enamel is a comparatively soft glass, a compound of flint or sand, red lead, and soda or potash. These materials are melted together, producing an almost clear glass, with a slightly bluish or greenish tinge; this substance is known as flux or frit. Colored enamels are made by introducing a metallic oxide into the flux when the latter is in a molten state.

There are three principal enameling techniques. First, champlevé, in which parts of the surface of the base are cut away to leave a solid raised pattern. The hollows are then filled in with colors, and the article is afterwards cleaned, smoothed and baked. Next, there is cloisonné. In this case, thin strips of metal are soldered edge-on to the object in order to produce the pattern, the spaces between being then filled in, and the whole baked as above. In the third class are painted enamels, applied to a flat or slightly curved surface such as a shallow dish, with the base invariably copper plate. The article is first coated all over with a layer of plain enamel, on which the design is added by successive layers of color.

There is no record of enameling on metal until the time of Alexander the Great (356 - 323 BCE). At their zenith in the 10th–11th centuries, Byzantine enamellers created delicate, highly expressive miniature scenes in a great range of colors that shine like jewels.

Throughout history, jewelry has been made more colorful by the application of enamels. Similarly, arms and armor, horse trappings, and even domestic items, such as mirrors and hanging bowls, were embellished with enamel decoration. Throughout the Middle Ages, both secular and ecclesiastical objects were elaborately enameled.

Fresco

Fresco is a technique of mural painting executed on freshly laid (wet) lime plaster. Water is the vehicle for dry-powder pigment to merge with the plaster and, as the plaster dries and sets, the paint becomes an integral part of the wall. The word fresco in Italian means "fresh," and may be contrasted with fresco-secco (wet-dry) or secco (dry) painting techniques, which are applied to dried plaster. Michelangelo used fresco-secco for many of his works, such as the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Fresco paintings outlive almost every other medium. An old fresco from Mesopotamia dates from the early 18th century BCE. The oldest surviving Minoan frescoes are found on the island of Santorini (classically known as Thera), dated to c. 1640–1600 BCE.

Not all colors can be achieved in true fresco, because only some pigments work chemically in the very alkaline environment of fresh lime-based plaster.

Blue was a particular problem, and skies and blue robes were often added in secco, because neither azurite blue nor lapis lazuli, the only two blue pigments then available, works well in wet fresco.

A beautiful example of secular frescoes created in the late Medieval period is in the Palazzo Pubblico (1288-1309) in the Italian city of Siena. The detailed wall fresco by Ambrogio Lorenzetti is part of a mural series titled *Effects of Good Government in the City and in the Country*. It features a countryside view of Siena including all four agricultural seasons — from planting to harvesting — in one painting. Peasants are hard at work in the fields with their baskets overflowing with crops, while nobles look down on the scene from a hilltop. In the top left corner of the fresco a personification of security in the form of a winged female hovers, holding out a scroll on which the written words promise peace and security to all that follow the rule of law. The heavy focus on the earth makes it one of the first examples in Western art of a dedicated landscape painting.

Considered an important work of late Medieval art, the painting shows the growing value placed on secular-themed art that was used to reinforce both the responsibilities of ruling powers and the need for individuals to be law-abiding citizens. The notion of good citizenship was one of the many fundamental principles of the Humanist worldview that would come to underscore the looming Renaissance period.

Illuminated manuscripts

"Manuscript" is derived from the Latin *manuscripti*, meaning handwritten. Hand-made books with artistic decoration are called illuminated manuscripts. A medieval manuscript is a codex (pl. codices), meaning a book made of pages bound between two boards. Ancient scribes wrote on scrolls, which only survive in occasional fragments. The pages of codices, on the other hand, are protected by their covers and have a greater chance of survival. Thus, medieval books survive in large numbers. The original manuscripts of ancient writers do not survive. We know them today only because medieval scribes copied them.

The beauty of medieval manuscripts often obscures the story of their arduous making. It is easy to forget that the parchment pages, inks and pigments used for writing and painting, even the wooden boards, string, and leather straps for binding were all products of painstaking manual labor. Making a book took many craftsmen.

And these basic materials were costly: when the Anglo-Saxon Monkwearmouth-Jarrow Abbey planned to create three copies of the bible in 692 — of which one survives as the *Codex Amiatinus* — the first step

necessary was to breed the cattle to supply the 1,600 calves required to give the skin for the vellum.

Art was merely looked at, but books engaged the hand. Getting at a manuscript's contents required unfastening clasps, grasping tabs attached to the edges of pages, or lifting protective veils that covered illuminations. These encounters left marks — dirt, a scribbled annotation, the loss of pigment where an illumination was rubbed. Florentius, a scribe, wrote in 945, "Turn the pages slowly, and keep your fingers far away from the letters, for just as hail damages crops, so a useless reader ruins both writing and book."

Due to the vast development of illuminated manuscripts, a unique style that emerged was the creation of the historiated letter. This was an enlarged, often decorated letter used at the start of a paragraph and other sections of text that typically contained a picture.
(In modern parlance, a historiated letter is a "drop cap.")

The Lindisfarne Gospels (715 – 720 CE) is an illuminated manuscript that was created in a monastery in Lindisfarne in North East England and is made up of the four Christian gospels. The manuscript is seen as a great example of Medieval European bookmaking, as it was richly illustrated and originally encased in a fine leather binding covered with precious jewels and metals. It includes a carpet page (named such due to their resemblance to detailed oriental carpets), which does not contain any text and was designed solely for decorative effect. The colors are vivid — reds, blues, greens, and gold — adding to the dramatic effect of the page which outlines a large cross in red. The carpet page features serpentine interlacements of fantastic animals that devour each other, curling over and returning on their writhing, elastic shapes.

The Book of Kells (c. 800), produced by three anonymous Celtic monks, is another masterwork of Western calligraphy. One of the greatest treasures of its kind, the *Book of Kells* was written on vellum (calfskin) pages in calligraphic Latin and features the four gospels of the New Testament. Practically all the 680 pages are decorated in some way or another. On some pages every corner is filled with detailed and beautiful Celtic designs. There are many images of animals throughout, from exotic peacocks, lions and snakes to more domestic cats, hares and goats.

Beginning in the 1100s CE, as literacy rates rose among European nobility, the demand for the reproduction of manuscript texts for personal use increased dramatically. As one of the few groups with the education to produce manuscripts on a commercial level, some religious orders began accepting contracts from private citizens. This proved to be a lucrative profession and formed part of the financial basis for many monasteries in Europe.

Manuscripts were notoriously tedious to create and a single text could, in some cases, take a year or more for a scribe to complete. By the 1400s, demand for manuscripts had far exceeded what could be produced in monasteries. Entrepreneurs began opening scriptoria, workshops dedicated to the reproduction of manuscripts. Some scriptoria even had craftsmen to produce illustrations and embellished initials or drop caps. These scriptoria would give way to the publishing houses populating Europe after the advent of Johannes Gutenberg's printing press.

Gutenberg (c. 1393 – 1468) was a German inventor and craftsman who created a movable-type printing press. Though movable type was already in use in East Asia, Gutenberg's invention enabled a much faster rate of printing. The printing press led to the mass-spread of literature and thus an information revolution throughout Europe. It had a profound impact on the development of the Renaissance, Reformation, and humanist movements. Gutenberg is often cited, correctly, as among the most influential figures in human history.

In 1501, Pope Alexander VI threatened excommunication for anyone who printed manuscripts without the church's approval. Twenty years later, books from John Calvin and Martin Luther spread. To add to Alexander's discomfort, Copernicus published *On the Revolutions of Heavenly Spheres*, which was seen as heresy by the church.

Jewelry (See the chapter titled *Arts and Crafts in the Middle Ages Part II*)

Literature

As a means of communicating ideas and storing information, written language is the single most important and far-reaching technology available to humans. The early beginnings in Medieval literature include philosophy, religious treatises, and legal texts, as well as works of the imagination such as poetry, drama, romance, epic prose, and histories. Just as in modern literature, it is a rich field of study, from the utterly sacred to the exuberantly profane, touching all points in between.

Literary works were originally composed in Latin (Church language), but poets began writing in vernacular (the common language of the people) as early at the 7th century. Vernacular literature was further popularized in Britain by Alfred the Great (r. 871-899) in an attempt to encourage widespread literacy. The Norman Conquest of 1066 established French as the language of literature and transformed Old English to Middle English. Even so, most literate people of that time were likely in either government or the church.

Much medieval literature is anonymous. Authors often tended to re-tell and embellish stories they had heard or read rather than invent new stories. From this point of view, the names of the individual authors seemed much less important. It was not until the 13th and 14th centuries that authors began writing under their own names. Whether known or anonymous, these writers created some of the greatest works of literature in history.

Theological works were the dominant form of literature typically found in libraries during the Middle Ages. Catholic clerics were the intellectual center of society and it is their literature that was produced in the greatest quantity. Hagiographies, or "lives of the saints," were frequently written as an encouragement to the devout and a warning to others. The Jewish population of Europe also produced several outstanding writers. Maimonides and Rashiare are two of the best-known and most influential.

Historians frequently relied on fable and myth to round out and develop their stories. The works of historians such as Gildas (500-570), Bede (673-735), and Nennius (9th century) in Britain all contain mythic elements and repeat fables as fact. The most famous example of this is Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (1136), written in Latin. The earliest secular tales often relate to myths as well.

The masterpiece *Beowulf*, for example, is the epic tale of a lone hero defeating the dark monster that threatens the people of the land, a theme perennially popular from ancient times to the present day. The story is set in Scandinavia in the 5th and 6th centuries, but the first manuscript found is dated no earlier than 975 CE. The figure of King Arthur, an ancient British hero, is another character who attracted the attention and imagination of early writers.

A new poetry of "courtly love" became fashionable in Europe. Traveling singers — troubadours and trouvères — made a living from their love songs. The songs of courtly love often express unrequited longing for an ideal woman, but there are also aubades (dawn farewells by lovers) and humorous ditties as well as political poetry.

Travel literature was highly popular, as fantastic accounts of far-off lands (frequently embellished or entirely false) entertained a society that supported sea voyages and trading along coasts and rivers, as well as pilgrimages. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* became popular at the end of the 14th century.

While women in the medieval period never achieved full equality with men, some women used their skill with the written word to gain renown. Religious writing was the easiest avenue — women who would later be canonized as

saints frequently published their reflections, revelations, and prayers. Much of what is known about women in the Middle Ages is known from the works of nuns such as Clare of Assisi, Bridget of Sweden, and Catherine of Siena. In the secular field, some women were patrons of books and owners of significant book collections.

One of the most famous writers of the Middle Ages, Christine de Pizan (1364 - 1430), wrote her highly influential works in prose (rather than poetry), as did the great Italian artist Giovanni Boccaccio (1313 - 1375), best known for his masterpiece, *The Decameron*.

Allegory is so prominent in this period as a literary device as to deserve special mention. Much of medieval literature relied on allegory to convey the morals the author had in mind while writing — representations of abstract qualities, events, and institutions are thick in much of the literature of this time. Important examples include the *Romance of the Rose*, *Everyman*, *Piers Plowman*, the *Roman de Fauvel*, and the *Divine Comedy*.

Metalworks

The historical roots of metalworking predate recorded history. It evolved from shaping soft, native metals like gold with simple hand tools, through to the smelting of ores and hot forging of harder metals like iron. Metalworking was being carried out in South Asia as early as 7000 BCE. By the Medieval period, almost every farmstead was a site of ironworking for the repair of tools and farm implements, and craftsmen were making metal vessels, utensils, church furniture, decorative objects, architectural ornamentation, jewelry, sculpture, weapons, and armor.

Early metalworkers learned many skills, such as hammering, casting, embossing, inlaying, gilding, and the application of niello, enamel, and gems. Inlaying is the art of encrusting gold wire (sometimes silver or copper) on the surface of iron, steel, or bronze. Gilding is the art of decorating objects with gold leaf or powder or the similar application of silver, palladium, aluminum, and copper alloys. Decoration that uses tiny beads of metal is called granulation and the use of thin wires is called filigree. Niello, a blackish-colored metallic alloy, was often used to create lines of detail to contrast with gold or silver.

Lead is one of the earliest metals discovered and was in use by 3000 BCE. In ancient Rome, metal was used to make water pipes for plumbing, bath linings, aqueducts, and cooking pots. Ancient scientists also used it in early cosmetics, paints, and pigments.

Copper was the first nonprecious metal to be used by man, but by the 4th

millennium BCE, Eastern craftsmen discovered that copper alloys using tin or zinc were both more durable and easier to work with. This gave birth to bronze (tin and copper), brass (tin, copper, and zinc), and pewter (tin with some bismuth, antimony, or copper.)

Precious metals and gemstones were as expensive and prestigious in the medieval world as they are today. Creating tiny, intricate, perfect detail took serious skill, and that, too, could command a high price. Medieval metalwork, particularly that created for sacred or royal purposes, was often set with precious and semiprecious gemstones, colorful enamels, and antique ivories or cameos.

Medieval smiths had a few possible methods for shaping metal objects. They might hammer from the front (chasing), hammer from the back (repousse), use a stamp, or cast in a mold. The lost wax method of casting is a very old casting technique that involves several steps. First, the artist modeled the desired object out of beeswax, covered it with clay, and baked it until the clay hardened and the wax melted and flowed away (hence "lost wax"). Then, they poured molten metal into the clay mold through pre-prepared channels. When the metal hardened, the clay mold was removed to reveal the finished object.

Luxury metalworks tended to be religious in nature. These include reliquaries, which were elaborate containers for religious relics. For a church or monastery, owning relics was an important source of both status and income. There were also crosses for altars or processions, portable altars, manuscript bindings, small-scale statuary, bronze doors, coins and medals, crowns, baptismal fonts, boxes, and more

Bronze was used to create many objects. Almost every church had at least one bell. Roman bells were cast from Campanian brass, whence comes the word 'campanile' for a bell-tower. Most bells, however, are of bell metal, a special bronze. Grilles, gates, tombs and statues were also made of bronze.

Of particular note are the many magnificent sculptured bronze doors. In some cases their design can be traced back to the Imperial days of the Pantheon which possesses the oldest surviving bronze doors in the world. These were erected by Hadrian in 164 CE, and are truly gigantic, being 39 feet high and 19 feet wide overall.

Also made were "eagle lecterns." These are book stands with ornamental pedestals, with the panel which supports the enormous missals taking the form of the outspread wings of an eagle, a griffin, or a pelican. In addition, bronze was used for monumental seven-branched candlesticks (menorah), crucifixes, and statues.

Some of the finest bronze articles were modelled on Oriental pieces brought back from the Holy Land by crusaders. These are aquamaniles, a type of ewer used to pour water for washing one's hands. They are usually in the shape of lions—symbols of valor, pride, physical strength. Similar basins were round, the insides engraved with scenes from classical mythology or the bible or with allegorical figures personifying the virtues and the vices, the liberal arts, the seasons, and so on.

The fine bronze figures on Henry VII's and Margaret of Richmond's tombs at Westminster were executed by no less a person than Torrigiano, the same young man who, when a student, quarreled with his fellow-student Michelangelo, and struck him such a blow on the nose as to disfigure the great sculptor for the rest of his life.

Monumental brasses were exceedingly numerous in England, where some 4,000 still exist. From the 13th through the 16th centuries, it became the vogue to set into the stone slab covering a floor tomb a brass plate engraved with the figure of the deceased.

In the category of small metal decorations, the Sutton Hoo Purse-Lid is probably the most famous. It's a small piece made in the early 7th century as a cover lid for a Merovingian purse, a leather pouch for coins. The purse-lid is considered to be "one of the most remarkable creations of the early medieval period." About seven and a half inches long, it is ornamented in gold and garnet cloisonné enamel, a symbol of great wealth and status.

The purse hung from the waist belt by the three hinges seen on top of it. The lid formed part of an ensemble of richly decorated fittings to the clothing and weapon worn by the body that were probably made as a set. These consist of a gold belt buckle, and gold and garnet shoulder-clasps, sword harness and scabbard mounts. In particular the purse used a combination of small and large pieces of garnet in a way comparable to the shoulder-clasps.

This work is one of the treasures found with the excavation of a burial ship full of personal treasures from the Sutton Hoo burial mound in Suffolk, England. Only the most important individuals would have been buried in such grand fashion and it is believed by many that this ship, and this leather purse, belonged to a king.

Mosaics (See the chapter titled *Arts and Crafts in the Middle Ages Part I.*)

Music (See the chapter titled *Song at Dawn.*)

Painting

The different types of Middle Ages painting can be roughly classified as fresco, panel, and iconography. Panel paintings were executed on flat, often wooden, panels. These might be single panels or diptychs made of two panels, triptychs made of three panels, or polyptychs made of multiple panels.

The works themselves focused largely on religious symbolism and imagery. One of the most iconic religious paintings created during this time was The Last Supper by Giotto di Bondone, painted in 1306. This work, portraying Jesus surrounded by his apostles, went on to become the most depicted religious scene in art history.

Painters included elaborate decorations and intricate patterns in their work. One example is a process called 'tooling,' which was used to imprint designs on the gold backgrounds of paintings. Artists also used bright colors such as an intense ultramarine blue, which was made from grinding lapis lazuli, a semi-precious stone, into a powder. Middle ages paintings often incorporated precious gems and metals.

A common medium used was tempera, also known as egg tempera. This is a permanent, fast-drying painting medium consisting of pigments mixed with a water-soluble binder, glutinous egg yolks. Tempera also refers to the paintings done in this medium.

During this period, subject matter began to change, along with the art style, as painters started to focus on mythology, animals, and various other themes that differed from the norm. One particular artistic element that artists began to adopt within their artworks was realism, which became an important feature. Bodies were no longer depicted as stiff and flat; the illusion of movement and fluidity was becoming common practice.

Sculpture

Medieval sculpture dealt primarily with religious themes, the figures often integrated into the architecture of cathedrals and churches. An example is the intricate carvings found on cathedrals like the Notre-Dame de Paris. These sculptures often portray lively scenes from the bible, creating a visual storytelling experience for visitors. Such art was designed to convey deep religious emotion, with exaggerated facial features to enhance storytelling. Body proportions were often unrealistic, focusing instead on symbolic meanings.

In the seventh century, Pope Gregory the Great wrote: "What Scripture is to the educated, images are to the ignorant … they read in them what they cannot read in books." This key declaration authorized images in the service

of the church. These stone figures served the uneducated, the majority of the population, who could not read.

The choice of medium often dictated the level of detail and size of the work. Wood, easier to carve, allowed intricate designs, whereas stone and metal offered durability for outdoor placements. Ivory was used to sculpt complex designs on book covers, caskets, panels, doors, and devotional items.

Sculptors used several techniques to bring their creations to life. The most common techniques were carving wood or stone, molding clay or wax, and casting by pouring molten material into molds. Also popular was relief sculpture, a design that is raised above its background, commonly used on architectural elements like doors, altar panels, and stone coffins.

An interesting aspect of medieval sculpture techniques is the experimental use of polychromy, where sculptures were painted using vivid colors. This practice added realism and was especially popular in Europe. The use of polychromy suggests a different visual experience than that of the unpainted stone we often see today.

The size of sculptures on tombs denoted the wealth of individuals, with full-scale alabaster tombs existing as signs of excessive affluence, while smaller ivory sculptures were seen as merely devotional objects.

Sculpture underwent changes very similar to those in architecture, beginning a return to the Classical value of naturalistic representation. Realism began to replace the traditional abstractions, evolving from more rigid forms to intricate, expressive details.

Stained glass

The basic ingredients for making glass are sand and wood ash (potash). The mixture is melted into liquid which, when cooled, becomes glass. To color the glass, certain powdered metals are added to the mixture while the glass is still molten. To assemble the window, pieces of colored and painted glass are laid out on the design board, with the edges of each piece fitted into H-shaped strips of lead (cames). These cames are soldered to one another so that the panel is secure. When a panel is completed, putty is inserted between the glass and the lead cames for waterproofing. The entire composition is then stabilized with an iron frame (armature) and mounted in the window.

Window glass was in use from at least the 1st century CE and colored and painted window glass for use in religious buildings was manufactured in the early 800s. However, it was not until the advent of the monumental cathedral and church building campaigns in the 11th and 12th centuries that the demand

for colored glass increased significantly, reaching its highest level in the 14th and 15th centuries. Abbot Suger, who lived in the 12th century and reveled in blue colors representing the "divine gloom," is considered the father of the art.

Stained glass mosaics were set into windows, primarily in churches, but were also found in wealthy domestic settings and public buildings. During the art form's heyday, stained glass depicted religious tales from the Judeo-Christian bible or secular stories, such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Some of them also featured geometric patterns or abstract images often based on nature. Many narrative scenes give valuable insights into the medieval world.

Stained glass windows are a deliberately dynamic art. Set into panels on exterior walls, the different colors of glass react to the sun by glowing brightly. Then, colored light spills out from the frames and onto the floor and other interior objects in shimmering, dappled pools that shift with the sun.

Tapestry

In late medieval Europe, tapestry was the grandest and most expensive medium for figurative images in two dimensions, despite the rapid rise in importance of painting. Tapestry is relatively fragile, so large pieces were intended to hang on a wall. Many smaller pieces were made as covers for furniture or cushions, or curtains and bed hangings. European tapestries are normally made to be seen only from one side, and often have a plain lining added on the back. However, other traditions make tapestry to be seen from both sides.

The word tapestry is now used to describe a range of textiles, but historically and technically it designates a figurative weft-faced (in which all the warp threads are hidden in the completed work) textile woven by hand on a loom. In European practice, the loom consists of two rollers, between which plain warp threads (the load-bearing threads) are stretched. In the large-scale centers of production in continental Europe, the warps were made of wool, although linen was also used in more artisanal production.

Tapestry was sometimes called "arras," from the period when Arras was the leading production center. Arazzo is still the term for tapestry in Italian.

In the past, finer tapestries included silk and gilt-metal-wrapped silk. By varying the colors of the weft, the weaver created a pattern or figurative image. Between 1400 and 1530, Flemish weavers developed the ability to reproduce an extraordinary range of surface textures and painterly effects through the use of finer and finer interlocking triangles of color (hatchings or hachures), the juxtaposition of different materials, and the use of different techniques to link the weft threads.

In European medieval practice, the design was invariably copied from a full-scale colored pattern, known as the cartoon, a practice that continues to this day. The weavers were usually male, as the work was physically demanding; spinning the threads was usually a female preserve.

The quality of a tapestry depends on four variable factors: the quality of the cartoon from which it is copied, the skill of the weavers at translating the design into woven form, the fineness of the weave, and the quality of the materials from which it is made. The cost of a tapestry varied enormously, in direct proportion to its quality.

The success of decorative tapestry can be partially explained by its portability (they have been called "nomadic murals"). Kings and noblemen could fold up and transport tapestries from one residence to another. Many kings had "wardrobe" departments with their own buildings devoted to the care, repair, and movement of tapestries, which were folded into large canvas bags and carried on carts. Tapestries were also draped on the walls of castles for insulation during winter, as well as for decorative display.

One of the key factors was the manpower involved. Production was a labor-intensive process. It is generally estimated that weavers could produce up to one square yard of coarse tapestry per month. Higher-quality production, with a finer warp and weft count, was much slower, yielding perhaps half a square yard or less per month. A large tapestry, five yards high by eight yards wide, woven in wool alone, with a warp count of fifteen per inch, would have taken five weavers some eight months or so to weave. If finer materials were used, resulting in a higher warp count, it could take much longer.

Arts and Crafts in the Middle Ages Part I Mosaics

Written by Julia de Wolf Gibbs Addison (edited by Amanda Lee) and originally published in 1921, this book offers a glimpse into the rich history of arts and crafts during the Middle Ages, shedding light on the techniques, materials, and artistic expressions of the time. It focuses on such crafts as gold and silver work, jewelry, enamel, tapestry, embroidery, stone and wood carving, inlay, mosaic, and illumination of books. Addison emphasizes the importance of understanding medieval craftsmanship to appreciate its revival in modern times. The topics she discusses include the historical background and technical processes in metalwork, furnishing the reader with insights into the role of guilds and standards of craftsmanship during the Middle Ages. The introduction emphasizes the value of balancing utility and aesthetic value in craftsmanship, setting the stage for an in-depth examination of the artistry that characterized the medieval period.

About the author:
Julia de Wolf Gibbs Addison (1866 – 1952) was an American author and craftsman. She was born in Boston, Massachusetts, the daughter of Franklin Gibbs and Ann de Wolf Lovett, and was educated in England by a governess. Gibbs returned to Boston in 1878, where she studied art in private schools. Later she traveled to England and Italy for further training as an art student. In 1889 she was married to the clergyman Daniel Dulany Addison. Thereafter, she became known as a craftsman of ornamentation, mosaics, metal work, embroideries, heraldry, and an illustrator of vellum. She was the author of multiple books, plays, and songs that included Christmas carols.

The World of Mosaics

Mosaic, in art, is the decoration of a surface with designs made up of closely set, usually variously colored, small, irregular pieces of material such as stone, mineral, glass, tile, or shell called tesserae. Unlike inlay, in which the pieces to be applied are set into a surface that has been hollowed out to receive the design, mosaic pieces are applied onto a surface that has been prepared with an adhesive.

The earliest examples were found in a Mesopotamian temple from the 3rd millennium BCE, and were made of ivory, seashells, and colored stones. The passage of 4,000 or 5,000 years has changed little in the way mosaics are created.

Although not as famous as illuminated manuscripts or stained glass, the

mosaic was a popular art form during the Middle Ages. The Roman Empire carried the art form from Greece across the whole of Europe, where it found its way onto walls, ceilings and walkways, depicting everything from simple, often geometric, patterns to stories of daily life and heroic myths.

The peacock, for example, was a popular subject for Roman and Byzantine artists, often used to represent paradise, renewal, and spring. Associating the peacock with heavenly paradise was an extension of the Byzantine vision of earthly paradise—many wealthy citizens were known to have kept peacocks to roam among the flowers and trees of their gardens.

Mosaics with patterns and pictures became widespread in classical times, both in Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. Early Christian basilicas from the 4th century onwards were decorated with wall and ceiling mosaics. The art flourished in the Byzantine Empire from the 6th to the 15th centuries, and that tradition was adopted by the Norman Kingdom of Sicily in the 12th century. Roman and Byzantine influence led Jewish artists to decorate 5th and 6th century synagogues in the Middle East with floor mosaics.

The hard-wearing nature of mosaics has earned them the nickname 'eternal pictures.' But though common wear and tear don't really threaten medieval mosaics, moisture and earthquakes both do so significantly. As a result, many mosaics have been destroyed or damaged. But it's human interference that has more often harmed mosaics than helped them, mainly due to iconoclasm.

In the 8th and 9th centuries CE, Byzantine rulers outlawed the creation or veneration of religious images due to fears of idolatry, a belief known as iconoclasm. ('Iconoclast' is now figuratively applied to any individual who challenges cherished beliefs or venerated institutions on the grounds that they are erroneous or pernicious.) This ruling caused the destruction of countless mosaics, icons, and other Christian artworks. A contentious issue even at the time, iconoclast laws were overturned in 843 CE.

The Islamic world also abounds in medieval mosaics, which appear in both mosques and secular palaces. Because the Quran forbids pictures of God as sacrilegious, mosaic artists rose to the challenge with intricate geometric and abstract designs of breathtaking beauty and perfection, which they created as expressions of their faith. Their art gave rise to the awe-inspiring mosaics of the Grand Mosque at Cordoba in Spain.

As Christianity grew and prospered, mosaics flourished, starting in the 5th century CE when they replaced murals as church decoration. Art historians refer to narrative church decoration as 'Bibles of the Poor,' since it taught bible stories to illiterate congregations. Human figures and faces appear rather generalized, sometimes to the point that mosaic name labels must be included

to identify them. Large, boldly-gesturing figures, like those of modern-day comic strip characters, are easily legible to viewers in the church far below.

The surviving medieval mosaics we see today don't necessarily appear the way they did in the Middle Ages. In fact, they were occasionally adapted by removing some of the tesserae and re-setting them in different designs to accommodate changing tastes and political regimes. The church of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna presents a good example. The Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great (454-526 CE), who commissioned some of the mosaics, practiced a form of Christianity called Arianism. After Arianism fell seriously out of favor, later leaders removed images of Theodoric and his court by altering the mosaic to show sets of curtains where each figure had been.

But not all medieval mosaics contained religious imagery. Figures of donors, especially clerical or royal patrons, appear frequently. One example of this is the famous pair of 6th-century mosaics depicting the Byzantine Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora in the apse of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy. In both mosaics, the details of the textiles are beautiful. The robe which Justinian wears is covered with circular interlaces with birds in them; on the border of the Empress's robe are embroideries of the three Magi presenting their gifts; on one of the robes of the attendants there is a pattern of ducks swimming, while another is ornamented with leaves of a five-pointed form.

These two mosaics are located in the apse of the church as a reminder to parishioners that Justinian donated the money to build this church. A halo surrounds Justinian to indicate the belief that he was linked to God, and thus his right to rule was divinely given. The faith of the Emperor is reinforced by the fact that both mosaics are positioned directly below the image of Christ sitting atop the world as if in Heaven (in another mosaic positioned at the upper-most section of the apse). This was visual confirmation that Justinian was both the ruler of the empire, and a man of God.

Use of costly materials:
While Roman mosaics typically used stone tesserae in muted colors, some medieval mosaics glitter thanks to brightly-colored glass and gold tesserae. One can imagine how they would have sparkled during candlelit church services or with the sun shining on them.

The gold grounds which one sees in nearly all mosaics are constructed in an interesting way. Each cube is composed of plain glass of a greenish tinge, upon which is laid gold leaf. Over this leaf is another film of glass, extremely thin, so that the actual metal is isolated between two glasses, and is thus impervious to such qualities in the air as would tarnish it or cause it to deteriorate. To prevent an uninteresting evenness of surface on which the

sun's rays would glint in an annoying way, it was usual to lay the gold cubes in a slightly irregular manner, so that each facet, as it were, should reflect at a different angle, and the texture, especially in the gold grounds, never became monotonous.

The dangers of a clear gold ground were felt more fully by the workers at Ravenna and Rome, than in Venice. Architectural schemes were introduced to break up the surface: clouds and backgrounds, fields of flowers, and trees, and such devices, were used to prevent the monotony of the unbroken glint. But in Venice the decorators were brave; their faith in their material was unbounded, and they not only frankly laid gold in enormous masses on flat wall and cupola, but they even molded the edges and archivolts without separate ribs or strips to relieve them; the gold is carried all over the edges, which are rounded into curves to receive the mosaic, so that the effect is that of the entire upper part of the church having been pressed into shape out of solid gold. The lights on these rounded edges are incomparably rich.

In medieval Spain cabinets were often made of a sort of mosaic of ebony and silver. But in 1574 a Prohibition was issued against using silver in this way, since it was becoming scarce. Ebony, being expensive, was sometimes simulated with stain. An old fifteenth century recipe says: "Take boxwood and lay in oil with sulphur for a night, then let it stew for an hour, and it will become as black as coal."

An old Italian book enjoins the polishing of this imitation ebony as follows: "Is the wood to be polished with burnt pumice stone? Rub the work carefully with canvas and this powder, and then wash the piece with Dutch lime water so that it may be more beautifully polished. Then the rind of a pomegranate must be steeped, and the wood smeared over with it, and set to dry in the shade."

Contemporary:
Modern mosaics are made by artists and craftspeople around the world. Many materials other than traditional stone, ceramic tesserae, enameled and stained glass may be employed in any size, including shells, beads, charms, chains, coins, pieces of costume jewelry, carved stone, bottle caps, and found objects. Mosaic skinning (covering objects with mosaic glass) is done with thin enameled glass and opaque stained glass.

One artist transforms potholes into colorful mosaics with tiny hand-cut pieces of Italian glass and marble to create various motifs—such as flowers and food —that stand out against the surrounding gray, cracked, city pavements. Others, with the help of many people, transform city streets into colorful, mosaic landscapes and bring color and life to concrete pillars in train stations.

WORDS & PHRASES

chiaroscuro

In art, chiaroscuro (from Italian *chiaro*, "light," and *scuro*, "dark") is the use of strong contrasts between light and dark, usually bold contrasts affecting a whole composition. It is also a technical term used by artists and art historians for the use of contrasts of light to achieve a sense of volume in modelling three-dimensional objects and figures. The technique focuses on shadows and a single source of light to achieve photorealistic depth and tone. Similar effects in cinema, and black and white and low-key photography, are also called chiaroscuro.

Some evidence exists that ancient Greek and Roman artists used chiaroscuro effects, but in European painting the technique was only brought to its full potential by Leonardo da Vinci in the late 15th century.

Cosmati work

Cosmati work differs from the several similar mosaic techniques that flourished in Italy at about the same time mainly by its design, which balances areas of busy, intricate pattern with smooth areas of plain stone. following the ancient Roman tradition of clarity, simplicity, and monumentality.

The Cosma were a Roman family, seven members of which, for four generations, were skillful architects, sculptors, and workers in decorative geometric mosaic, mostly for church floors and furniture. Their name is commemorated in the genre of Cosmatesque work, often just called "Cosmati." This type of mosaic technique was practiced by Roman decorators and architects in the 12th and 13th centuries, in which tiny triangles and squares of colored stone (red porphyry, green serpentine, and white and other colored marbles) and glass paste were arranged in patterns and set into stone matrices or encrusted upon stone surfaces and combined with large, stone disks and strips to produce geometric designs.

A unique and remarkable example of the work in England is the great pavement (24 feet 10 inches square) in front of the High Altar of Westminster. It was laid down in 1268 by order of Henry III who had started re-building Edward the Confessor's Abbey in the new Gothic style in 1245. The workmen came from Rome, with a man called Odoricus at their head.

The pavement includes onyx, purple porphyry, green serpentine and yellow limestone. Also part of the original material are pieces of opaque colored glass — red, turquoise, cobalt blue and bluish white. It lies on a bed of dark limestone known as Purbeck marble. This is a major departure from Italian methods, since at home the workmen used white marble as a base. The use of glass in a pavement also goes against Italian practice.

The work includes an inscription and, in another place, an arbitrary combination of animal forms and numbers, marking a chart for determining the end of the world.

inlay

Inlay covers a range of techniques in sculpture and the decorative arts for inserting pieces of contrasting, often colored materials into depressions in a base object to form ornament or pictures that normally are flush with the matrix. A great range of materials have been used both for the base or matrix and for the inlays inserted into it. Inlay is commonly used in the production of decorative furniture, where pieces of colored wood, precious metals or even diamonds are inserted into the surface of the carcass using various matrices including varnishes. Lutherie inlays are frequently used as decoration and marking on musical instruments, particularly the smaller strings. Inlay was the chief wall treatment of the middle ages.

The cutting of material is often accomplished with a fine saw, like the modern jigsaw or scrollsaw (see definition below).

Some inlays are done in black and white marble. These are early works, and are the natural forerunners of the marvelous pavement at Siena. Later workers used black marbles for the backgrounds, red for the ground, and white for the figures, sometimes adding touches of yellow inlay for decorations, jewels, and so forth. Some of the workers even used gray marble to represent shadows, but this was very difficult, and those who attempted less chiaroscuro were more successful from a decorator's point of view.

intarsia

The inlay of wood has been called marquetry and intarsia, and was used principally on furniture and choir stalls. The origin of this art in Italy is the twelfth century.

Intarsia is a form of originally Arab wood inlaying that is similar to marquetry. The start of the practice dates from before 600 CE. The technique

of intarsia inlays sections of wood (at times with contrasting ivory or bone or mother-of-pearl) within the solid wood matrix of floors and walls or of tabletops and other furniture. By contrast marquetry assembles a pattern out of veneers glued upon the carcass. The word intarsia may derive from the Latin word *interserere* (to insert) while marquetry originates in France, much later, from *marqueter*, to mark.

Italian wood inlay began in Siena, where one Manuello is reported to have worked in the Cathedral in 1259. By 1478, there were thirty-four workshops of intarsia makers in Florence.

The earliest Italian workers took a solid block of wood, chiseled out a sunken design, and then filled in the depression with other woods. The only enemy to such work was dampness, which might loosen the glue, or cause the small thin bits to swell or warp. The glue was applied always when the surfaces were perfectly clean, and the whole was pressed, being screwed down on heated metal plates, that all might dry evenly.

It's interesting to note a few names of prominent artists in this branch of work. Bernardo Agnolo and his family are among them, and Domenico and Giovanni Tasso were woodcarvers who worked with Michelangelo.

jasper

Jasper is an aggregate of microgranular quartz and/or cryptocrystalline chalcedony and other mineral phases, an opaque, impure variety of silica, usually red, yellow, brown or green in color, rarely blue. It takes a high polish, and is used as a gemstone and for vases, seals, snuff boxes, and so on. The name means "spotted or speckled stone."

jigsaw

A jigsaw (or scrollsaw) is a saw with fine teeth and a narrow, vertical blade which can cut curves in wood or metal. With the right blades, you can cut shapes in a variety of materials. Nowadays, jigsaw are usually power-driven.

marquetry

In marquetry, thin sheets of wood, metal, or organic material, such as shell or mother-of-pearl, are cut into intricate patterns according to a preconceived design and affixed to the flat surfaces of furniture and also to small objects with smooth surfaces.

Marquetry differs from the more ancient craft of inlay, or intarsia, in which a solid body of one material is cut out to receive sections of another to form the surface pattern. The word marquetry derives from a Middle French word meaning "inlaid work."

The veneers used are primarily woods, but may include bone, ivory, turtle-shell (conventionally called "tortoiseshell"), mother-of-pearl, pewter, brass or fine metals. Many exotic woods as well as common varieties can be employed, from the near-white of boxwood to the near-black of ebony. Colors not found in nature can be achieved by applying dye to a veneer that retains stains well, such as sycamore.

Furniture inlaid with precious woods, metals, glass, and stones is known from the ancient world. Roman examples have been recovered from the first century sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum demonstrating that the technique was highly advanced. Marquetry elaborated upon Florentine techniques of inlaying solid marble slabs with designs formed of fitted marbles, jaspers and semi-precious stones.

mosaic

Mosaic is the decoration of a surface with designs made up of closely set, usually variously colored, small irregular pieces of material such as stone, mineral, glass, tile, or shell. Unlike inlay, in which the pieces to be applied are set into a surface that has been hollowed out to receive the design, mosaic pieces are applied onto a surface that has been prepared with an adhesive. Mosaics have a long history, starting in Mesopotamia in the 3rd millennium BCE and were particularly popular in the ancient Roman world.

niello

Niello is a black mixture, usually of sulphur, copper, silver, and lead, used as an inlay on engraved or etched metal, especially silver. It is added as a powder or paste, then fired until it melts and flows into the engraved lines in the metal. It hardens and blackens when cool, and the niello on the flat surface is polished off to show the filled lines in black, contrasting with the polished metal around it.

Niello was used on a variety of objects including sword hilts, chalices, plates, horns, adornment for horses, jewelry, and small fittings such as strap-ends, purse-bars, buttons, belt buckles and the like. It was also used to fill in the letters in inscriptions engraved on metal. In ornament, it came to have

competition from enamel, with far wider color possibilities, which eventually displaced it in most of Europe.

Niello first appears in the Roman period. Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79) describes the technique as Egyptian, and remarks the oddness of decorating silver in this way. Some of the earliest uses, from 1–300 AD, seem to be small statuettes and brooches of big cats, where niello is used for the stripes of tigers and the spots on panthers; these were very common in Roman art, as creatures of Bacchus. The animal repertoire of Roman Britain was somewhat different, and provides brooches with niello stripes on a hare and a cat. It was often used on spoons, which were inscribed with the owner's name.

pietra dura

Pietra dura (hard stones) is a term for the inlay technique of using cut and fitted, highly polished, colored stones to create images. The stonework, after the work is assembled loosely, is glued stone-by-stone to a substrate, usually wood or marble. Many different colored stones, particularly marbles, were used, along with semiprecious, and even precious, stones such as lapis lazuli, malachite, bloodstones, onyx, and jasper. It first appeared in Rome in the 16th century, reaching its full maturity in Florence. Pietra dura items are generally crafted on green, white or black marble base stones. Typically, the resulting panel is completely flat, but some examples where the image is in low relief were made, taking the work more into the area of hardstone carving.

It is distinct from mosaic in that the component stones are mostly much larger and cut to a shape suiting their place in the image, not all of roughly equal size and shape as in mosaic. Pietra dura is essentially stone marquetry. As a high expression of lapidary art, it is closely related to the art of jewelry. It can also be considered a branch of sculpture because three-dimensionality can be achieved, as with a bas relief.

A multitude of varied objects were created. Found are table tops, medallions, cameos, wall plaques, door panels, bowls, jardinieres, garden ornaments, fountains, and benches.

porphyry

The term porphyry is from the Ancient Greek *porphyra*, meaning "purple." Purple was the color of royalty, and the Roman "imperial porphyry" was a deep purple igneous rock. Some authors claimed that the rock was the hardest known in antiquity. Thus porphyry was prized for monuments and building projects in Imperial Rome and thereafter.

serpentine

Serpentine is a dark green or brown mineral with a silky luster, found in igneous and metamorphic rocks. It is used as an ornamental stone.

smalt

Cobalt glass—known as "smalt" when ground as a pigment—is a deep blue colored glass prepared by including a cobalt compound, typically cobalt oxide or cobalt carbonate, in a glass melt. Cobalt is a very intense coloring agent and very little is required to show a noticeable amount of color.

While the material used in mosaic wall decoration is sometimes a natural product, like marble, porphyry, coral, or alabaster, the picture may be composed of artificially prepared smalts—opaque glass of various colors, made in sheets and then cut up into cubes. An infinite variety in gradations of color and texture is thus made possible.

Smalt has been historically important as a pigment in glassmaking, painting, pottery, for surface decoration of other types of glass and ceramics, and other media.

The earliest known example of cobalt aluminate glass dates to a lump from about 2000 BCE in ancient Mesopotamia. In paintings, smalt has a tendency to lose its color over a long period, and is little used today. However, when used in ceramics for underglaze decoration, it keeps its color well, and is the main blue used in blue and white pottery from a wide range of dates and areas, including Chinese blue and white porcelain from the Yuan and Ming dynasties, Renaissance Italian maiolica, and Delftware.

terracotta

Terracotta (Italian: 'baked earth') is a hard semifired waterproof ceramic clay used in pottery and building construction. It's also used to describe the color brownish orange.

In art, pottery, applied art, crafts, construction and architecture, "terracotta" is a term often used for red-colored earthenware sculptures or functional articles such as flower pots, water and waste water pipes, tableware, roofing tiles and surface embellishment on buildings. Glazed architectural terracotta and its unglazed version as exterior surfaces for buildings were used in East Asia for

centuries before becoming popular in the West in the 19th century.

tessera

A tessera (plural: tesserae, diminutive tessella) is an individual tile, a small piece of stone, glass, ceramic, or other hard material usually formed in the shape of a square, used in creating a mosaic. It is also known as an abaciscus or abaculus. In early antiquity, mosaics were formed from naturally formed colored pebbles. By roughly 200 BCE, cut stone tesserae were being used in Hellenistic-Greek mosaics.

Glass was the major material for wall and vault mosaics of Early Christian and Byzantine churches, and marble and limestone tesserae were frequently used in the depiction of faces, woolen garments, rocks, and other objects that required a soft or rough appearance.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Parable of the Mote and Beam

A very interesting composition in mosaic, worked on by the renowned Matteo da Siena circa 1375, is that of the Parable of the Mote and the Beam. It shows two gentlemen in the costume of the period, one apparently declaiming to the other how much better it would be for him if it were not for the mote in his eye, while from the eye of the speaker himself extends, at an impossible angle, a huge wedge of wood, longer than his head, from which he appears to suffer no inconvenience, and which seems to have defied the laws of gravitation.

The moral lesson is to avoid hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and censoriousness. The analogy used is of a small object in another's eye as compared with a large beam of wood in one's own. In 21st century English a "mote" is more normally a particle of dust, particularly one that is floating in the air, rather than a splinter of wood.

The Ravenna Mosaics

Ravenna is the shrine of the mosaic craft in the fifth and sixth centuries. This small, northeastern Italian city has eight UNESCO sites to explore. The Byzantine rulers adorned the churches of Ravenna with stunning mosaics,

described by a poet as "the sweet color of Oriental sapphires."

There are incomparable walls, where the marvelous procession of white robed virgins gleam, and where the royal cortège of Justinian and Theodora glitters. The acme of the art was reached when these mural decorations were planned and executed, and the churches of Ravenna may be considered the central museum of the world for a study of mosaic.

Imagine sun-flooded squares lined with genteel palazzos, elegant domes soaring to the sky, and the gray, forbidding bulk of a Renaissance fortress. Dozens of churches, rich and Baroque or medieval and sober. And golden, sapphire and ivory white mosaics, the minuscule tiles meticulously aligned to shape a star-studded sky, a graceful dove spraying water on Jesus Christ's head, or a bemused sheep looking at a haloed Christ.

Under the emperor Justinian, Ravenna became the sister city of Constantinople, or the "Constantinople of the West." As Hagia Sofia was being built in Constantinople, the beautiful Basilica of San Vitale was being built in Ravenna. The world's two most famous mosaics — of Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora — are here.

Gaddo Gaddi

Gaddo Gaddi (c. 1260 – c. 1333) of Florence was a painter and mosaicist in the Gothic art style. He was a painstaking worker in mosaic, executing some works on a small scale entirely in eggshells of varying tints.

He is said to have executed the great mosaic inside the portal of Florence Cathedral, representing the Coronation of the Virgin, and may with more certainty be credited with the mosaics inside the portico of the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, relating to the legend of the foundation of that church; their date is probably 1308.

FOOD for THOUGHT

(quotes from the book)

A description of the scene of mosaic workers pursuing their calling:

Here was heard abusive language, there the joyous song; further on, the jest; above, the hammer: below, the trowel: now the dull and continuous thud of the tampon on the mosaics, and anon the clear and crystal like clicking of the

glassware rolling from the baskets on to the pavement, in waves of rubies and emeralds. Then the fearful grating of the scraper on the cornice, and finally the sharp rasping cry of the saw in the marble, to say nothing of the low masses said at the end of the chapel in spite of the racket.
(Julia de Wolf Gibbs Addison)

The only painting for eternity is mosaic.
(Domenico Ghirlandaio, painter, 1449 - 1494)

A medieval artist was usually a craftsman as well. He was not content with furnishing designs alone, and then handing them over to men whose hands were trained to their execution, but he took his own designs and carried them out. Thus, the designer adapted his drawing to the demands of his material and the craftsman was necessarily in sympathy with the design since it was his own. The result was a harmony of intention and execution which is often lacking when two men of differing tastes produce one object. Lübke sums up the talents of a medieval artist as follows: "A painter could produce panels with coats of arms for the military men of noble birth, and devotional panels with an image of a saint or a conventionalized scene from Scripture for that noble's wife. With the same brush and on a larger panel he could produce a larger sacred picture for the convent round the corner, and with finer pencil and more delicate touch he could paint the vellum leaves of a missal," and so on. If an artistic earthenware platter was to be made, the painter turned to his potter's wheel and to his kiln. If a filigree coronet was wanted, he took up his tools for metal and jewelry work.

Redgrave lays down an excellent maxim for general guidance to designers in arts other than legitimate picture making. He says: "The picture must be independent of the material, the thought alone should govern it; whereas in decoration the material must be one of the suggestors of the thought, its use must govern the design." This shows the difference between decoration and pictorial art.
(Julia de Wolf Gibbs Addison, from the Introduction)

Arts and Crafts in the Middle Ages Part II

Jewelry and Precious Stones

In her chapter on jewelry and precious stones, Julia de Wolf Gibbs Addison says, "We are told that the word 'jewel' has come by degrees from Latin, through French, to its present form; it commenced as a 'gaudium' (joy), and progressed through 'jouel' and 'joyau' to the familiar word, as we have it."

Jewelry consists of ornamental pieces, such as rings, necklaces, earrings, and bracelets, that are made of materials like gold, silver, glass, and plastic, are often set with genuine or imitation gems, and are worn for personal adornment. Jewelry is one of the oldest types of archaeological artefact — with 100,000-year-old beads made from Nassarius shells thought to be the oldest known example. Over the centuries, such adornment, made for nearly every body part, came to be a sign of social or religious rank. Jewelry was worn to reflect prosperity and wealth and often as an offering to gods.

A gemstone is a piece of mineral crystal which is cut or polished to make adornments. Certain other rocks (such as lapis lazuli, opal, and obsidian) and organic materials (such as amber, jet, and pearl) are also used. Most gemstones are hard, but some softer minerals are desired because of their color or luster.

The traditional classification of gemstones, which goes back to the ancient Greeks, begins with defining precious and semi-precious. The precious stones are emerald, ruby, sapphire and diamond, with all other gemstones being semi-precious. This distinction reflects the rarity of the so-called precious stones in ancient times, as well as their quality: all are translucent, with fine color in their purest forms (except for the colorless diamond), and very hard. The traditional distinction does not necessarily reflect modern monetary values. For example, while garnets are relatively inexpensive, a green garnet called tsavorite can be far pricier than a mid-quality emerald.

The techniques for making jewelry are as varied as the stones themselves. For example, beaded jewelry is the art of attaching beads by stringing them by hand with a needle and thread or thin wire. Beads are often small pieces of plastic, glass, gemstones, or wood, but other materials can be used. Another old technique is wire wrapping, which consists of wrapping wire components over one another to connect them without soldering or heat.

Silver and goldsmithing are the processes of shaping precious metals into jewelry by hammering, casting, soldering, chasing, riveting, embossing, and more. Sculpting techniques are used for cameos and inlays. Delicate filigree and fine enamels have made Anglo-Saxon and Irish jewelry famous.

Fused glass can be used to make items like pendants and small wearables. Metal clay jewelry is made from a special type of clay that becomes solid after it is fired in a kiln. The clay is easy to shape by hand or by using tools before firing in the kiln.

Most modern jewelry continues traditional forms and styles. While historical techniques remain mostly unchanged, new innovations are changing the landscape, like 3D printed casting and lab-grown gemstones.

Techniques:
Gemstones and jewelry techniques were and are used in many ways.

The first objects to be made in the form of personal adornment were necklaces. The oldest archaeological evidence of copper mining and working, for example, was the discovery of a copper pendant in northern Iraq circa 8,700 BCE. Necklaces are still the chief feature in feminine attire and adornment in some lands.

Brooches and clasps were used a great deal in the Medieval period. They were often called "ouches," and were usually made of jeweled gold. The earliest forms were the 'annular' — a long pin with a hinged ring at its head for ornament, and the 'penannular' — a pin with a broken circle at its head. Brooches were frequently worn stuck in one's hat. By the late ninth century, an increased supply of silver gave rise to a new series of penannular brooches made entirely of solid silver — the "bossed" and "thistle" brooches. These are found widely in Britain and Ireland.

Finger rings were popular and often made of glass. Medieval rosaries were generally composed of beads of coral or carnelian, and often of gold and pearls as well.

Jeweled arms and trappings became very rich. Pius II writes of the German armor: "What shall I say of the neck chains of the men, and the bridles of the horses, which are made of the purest gold; and of the spears and scabbards which are covered with jewels?" Spurs were also set with jewels, and often damascened with gold and ornamented with appropriate mottoes.

Aside from jewelry, many objects were decorated with gemstones and precious metals. These include, just as an example, shrines, crowns, belts, goblets, and bells. One famous bell is the one named for St. Patrick. The outer case is an exceedingly rich example of Celtic work. On a ground of brass, fine gold and silver filigree is applied in curious interlaces and knots, and it is set with several jewels, some of large size, in green, blue, and dull red. In the front are two large tallow-cut Irish diamonds, and a third was apparently set in

a place which is now vacant. On the back of the bell appears a Celtic inscription in most decorative lettering all about the edge.

On the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury was a stone "with an angell of gold poynting thereunto." Other stones on this shrine were described as sumptuous, the whole being damascened with gold wire, and "in the midst of the gold, rings; or cameos of sculptured agates, carnelians, and onyx stones."

We are lucky to have some of these old treasures to admire, what with the ravages of time, war, and thievery. Then there's the act of what we would now call 'repurposing.' Possessions of one kind were often converted into another, according to changing fashions. Philippa of Lancaster had a gold collar made out of two bottles and a tiny ornamental turret in 1380.

History of Pierced Ears

Ear piercing is one of the oldest known forms of body modification, dating back as far as 2500 BCE. Gold earrings, along with other jewelry made of gold, lapis lazuli, and carnelian were found in ancient sites. Gold, silver and bronze hoop earrings were prevalent in the Minoan Civilization (2000–1600 BCE) and examples can be seen on frescoes on the island of Santorini, Greece.

Early evidence of earrings worn by men can be seen in the carved images of soldiers of the Persian Empire. In Western Europe, earrings became fashionable among English courtiers and gentlemen in the sixteenth century. Among sailors, a pierced earlobe was a symbol that the wearer had sailed around the world or had crossed the equator.

It wasn't until the early 20th century that screw back earrings were invented. It was assumed that this new invention would eliminate the need for ear piercing. These earrings are popular but not very secure, especially with the heavier Art Deco designs. By the 1930s, the clip-on earring was invented. Clip-on earrings were able to hold the earring very snugly to the ear.

However, clip-on earrings were not always comfortable to wear. In the 1970s, pierced ears started making a comeback as women began to push the boundaries with what was socially acceptable to wear. Today both men and women freely pierce their ears.

Superstition

A superstition is any blindly accepted notion maintained despite lack of evidence. The first known use of the word in English was in the 1200s. Some synonyms are: illusion, fallacy, hallucination, myth, legend, old wives' tale,

and magical thinking.

Many superstitions stem from the same human trait that causes us to believe in monsters and ghosts: When our brains can't explain something, we make stuff up. Superstitious beliefs originated during our earliest days, when we needed to explain to one another how the mysterious, frightening world worked. We had no science, then, to explain earthquakes, thunderstorms, flooding, illness, and many other events, so we made up demons, spirits, and magic.

There are endless superstitions, legends, and myths concerning jewelry. Julia de Wolf Gibbs Addison lists several in *Arts and Crafts in the Middle Ages*. Ancient civilizations viewed jewelry as a source of power and protection, as well as for ornamental purposes. Jewelry was worn to ward off evil spirits, cure illnesses or attract good luck and success.

Gold jewelry, for example, is one of the most important symbols in Egyptian culture because it was thought to give its wearer eternal life after death due to its strong association with Ra—the Sun God—whose name meant 'eternal' in Egyptian hieroglyphics. Gold was also seen as an emblem of wealth and prosperity due to its rarity at the time; therefore only Pharaohs would have access to this precious metal, making it a signifier of their status within society at large.

Theophilus writes on the best method of sculpting crystal: "Take a goat of two or three years... make an opening between his breast and stomach, in the position of the heart, and lay in the crystal, so that it may lie in its blood until it grow warm. Cut what you please in it as long as the heat lasts."

In the Middle Ages, certain precious stones were associated with cures for certain evils. The blood-stone was of general efficacy, and the opal, when folded in a bay leaf, had the power of rendering the owner invisible. Some stones, especially the turquoise, turned pale or became deeper in hue according to the state of the owner's health. The owner of a diamond was invincible; the possession of an agate made a man amiable and eloquent. Ancient Greek mythology tells of amethyst's powers to hinder intoxication. The Greeks drank from goblets made of amethyst to help them stay sober.

A stone engraved with the figure of a hare was believed to be valuable in exorcising the devil. That of a dog preserved the owner from "dropsy or pestilence." An old French book speaks of an engraved stone with the image of Pegasus being particularly healthful for warriors; it was said to give them "boldness and swiftness in flight."

There was a physician in the fourth century who was famous for his cures of

colic and biliousness by means of an iron ring engraved with an exorcism requesting the bile to go and take possession of a bird.

Until the 1700s, many doctors thought the only way to cure scrofula (a form of tuberculosis) was to be touched by a member of a royal family, who were thought to have a miraculous power to cure the illness. The 'touchings' began in France in 1060 and in England in 1100. This act of public healing by powerful kings and royal family members encouraged the nickname "King's Evil" for the disease. After the touching, the sovereign presented the ailing person with an angel on a gold-plated coin that was to be hung around his or her neck by a ribbon. This was used as a way of warding off the disease. At age three, the English lexicographer Samuel Johnson was treated for scrofula in this way, touched by Queen Anne and presented with a piece of gold. To no effect, of course.

The superstition concerning the jewel in the toad's head was a persistent one. An old writer gives directions for getting this stone, which the toad in his life time seems to have guarded most carefully. "A rare good way to get the stone out of a toad," he says, "is to put a toad into an earthen pot; put the same into an ant's hillocke, and cover the same with earth. The ants will eat the toad, so that the bones and stone will be left in the pot."

Bartholomew, the medieval scientist, tells narratives of the magical action of the sapphire. "And if thou put an addercop in a box, and hold a very sapphire of India at the mouth of the box any while, by virtue thereof the addercop is overcome and dieth, as it were suddenly. And this same I have seen oft and in many divers places."

Marco Polo says that in the mountains, "There are certain great deep valleys to the bottom of which there is no access. Wherefore the men who go in search of the diamonds take with them pieces of meat," which they throw into this deep valley. He relates that the eagles, when they see these pieces of meat, fly down and get them, and when they return, they settle on the higher rocks. The men raise a shout and drive them off. After the eagles have thus been driven away, "the men recover the pieces of meat, and find them full of diamonds, which have stuck to them."

Modern myths about jewels are not quite as inventive. For example, a woman is advised not to wear pearls on her wedding day, or else there will be tears in her marriage.

In some cultures, evil eye jewelry (featuring a blue eye symbol, sometimes called a "nazar") is worn when babies are born. This symbol wards off the malicious evil eyes of admirers casting ill intentions on the newborn child. The eye offers protection and good luck, too.

Some people have the idea that wedding rings are capable of predicting a baby's gender. The ritual involves somebody dangling a wedding ring on a string over the belly of a pregnant woman. If it moves in a circle, the baby is supposed to be a girl; if it moves from one side to the opposite, it will be a boy.

Silver is associated with the moon and the divine feminine, which many people believe to be a source of protection and nurturing. It is also said to have the ability to reflect negative energy away from the wearer, so it makes sense that people wear silver as a way to keep evil spirits away.

Things have the power you allow them to have. We think you should wear what you like.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Bartholomew Angelicus

BartholomewAngelicus (c1203 – 1272) was a member of the Franciscan order. He was the author of the compendium *On the Properties of Things*, an early forerunner of the encyclopedia and a widely cited book in the Middle Ages. Bartholomew carefully notes the sources for the material included, and his annotations give a good idea of the wide variety of works available to a medieval scholar. A number of manuscripts of the Latin and French versions survive.

On the Properties of Things was organized in 19 books. The subjects of the books, in order, are God, angels (including demons), the human mind or soul, physiology, of ages (family and domestic life), medicine, the universe and celestial bodies, time, form and matter (elements), air and its forms, water and its forms, earth and its forms including geography, gems, minerals and metals, animals, and color, odor, taste and liquids.

St. Eloi

Julia de Wolf Gibbs Addison says, "The greatest medieval jeweler was St. Eloi of Limoges (588 - 660)." More familiar to us as Eligius (Eloi is the French version) and venerated as Saint Eligius, he was a Frankish goldsmith, courtier, and bishop.

Eloi was a workman in Limoges, as a youth, under the famous Abho; there he learned the craft of a goldsmith. He was such a splendid artisan that he soon received commissions for extensive works on his own account. King Clothaire II ordered from him a golden throne, and supplied the gold which was to be used. To the astonishment of all, Eloi presented the king with two golden thrones, and immediately it was noised abroad that the goldsmith Eloi was possessed of miraculous powers, since, out of gold sufficient for one throne, he had constructed two.

People of a more practical turn found out that Eloi had learned the art of alloying the gold, so as to make it do double duty.

Eligius used his influence and his money to ransom captive slaves and care for the poor. A legend emerged of him once healing a demon-possessed horse by amputating and miraculously re-attaching the horse's foreleg.

Eligius is best known for being the patron saint of horses and those who work with them. He is also the patron saint of goldsmiths, metalworkers, coin collectors, veterinarians, and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), a corps of the British Army. The legend of the shoeing of the horse is depicted in several works of art.

John de Garland

John de Garland (c1190 - c1270) was born in England, studied at Oxford, and then at the medieval University of Paris, where he was teaching by 1220.

While the monasteries undoubtedly controlled most of the art education of the early middle ages, there were also laymen who devoted themselves to these pursuits. John de Garland wrote, in the eleventh century, a short book titled *Dictionarius*, dealing with various arts and crafts. Garland's grammatical works were extensively used in England, and were often printed by Richard Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde. The title, *Dictionarius*, is the origin of the word dictionary in English. He also wrote much poetry in Latin.

Life in France was tumultuous in those years. In 1231, the Cathars regained influence at Toulouse, university teachers ceased to be paid, and many considered it too dangerous to remain in the city. John de Garland was one of those who escaped, disguising himself as a serf or slave.

Benvenuto Cellini

Benvenuto Cellini (1500 – 1571) was an Italian goldsmith, sculptor, and

author. His best-known extant works include the Cellini Salt Cellar, the sculpture of Perseus with the Head of Medusa, and his autobiography, which has been described as "one of the most important documents of the 16th century."

The *Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini* was started in the year 1558, when he was 58, and ended abruptly just before his last trip to Pisa around the year 1563. The memoirs give a detailed account of his singular career, as well as his loves, hatreds, passions, and delights, written in an energetic, direct, and racy style. As one critic wrote, "Other goldsmiths have done finer work, but Benvenuto Cellini is the author of the most delightful autobiography ever written." Cellini's writing shows a great self-regard and self-assertion, sometimes running into extravagances which are impossible to believe. He even writes in a complacent way of how he contemplated his murders before carrying them out.

Cellini always set colored stones in a bezel or closed box of gold, with a foil behind them. He once set a ruby on a bit of frayed silk instead of on the customary foil. The result was most brilliant. The jewelers asked him what kind of foil he had used, and he replied that he had employed no foil. Then they exclaimed that he must have tinted it, which was against all laws of jewelry. Again Benvenuto swore that he had done nothing forbidden or unprofessional to the stone. "At this the jewelers got a little nasty, and used strong language," says Cellini. They then offered to pay well for the information if Cellini would inform them by what means he had obtained so remarkable a luster. Benvenuto, expressing himself indifferent to pay, but "much honored in thus being able to teach his teachers," opened the setting and displayed his secret, and all parted excellent friends.

Marco Polo

Marco Polo (c. 1254 – 1324) was a Venetian merchant, explorer and writer who traveled through Asia along the Silk Road between 1271 and 1295. His travels are recorded in *The Travels of Marco Polo*, a book that described the then-mysterious culture and inner workings of the Eastern world, including the wealth and great size of the Mongol Empire and China under the Yuan dynasty, giving Europeans their first comprehensive look into China, Persia, India, Japan, and other Asian societies.

Though he was not the first European to reach China, Marco Polo was the first to leave a detailed chronicle of his experience. His account provided the Europeans with a clear picture of the East's geography and ethnic customs, and it included the first Western record of porcelain, gunpowder, paper money, and some Asian plants and exotic animals. His narrative inspired

Christopher Columbus and many other travelers.

Marco Polo visited Kashgar and Hetian, locations celebrated for beautiful jade. He also visited desert grottoes adorned with magnificent Buddhist carvings. While some speculate that Marco Polo brought back material things, such as pasta from China, these stories may prove more legend than fact. According to *Culinary Lore*, Polo mentions encountering noodles in China, but the text suggests that he was comparing the noodles he saw abroad with those he was already familiar with in Europe.

St. Dunstan

St. Dunstan (c. 909 – 988) was an English bishop and Benedictine monk. His work restored monastic life in England and reformed the English Church. His 11th-century biographer Osbern, himself an artist and scribe, states that Dunstan was skilled in "making a picture and forming letters," as were other clergy of his age who reached senior rank. He not only worked in metal, but was a good musician, painter, organ-builder, and a great scholar, in fact a genuine rounded man of culture, an Anglo-Saxon 'Renaissance Man.'

Serving as an important minister of state to several English kings, Dunstan was the most popular saint in England for nearly two centuries, having gained fame for the many stories of his greatness, not least among which were those concerning his famed cunning in defeating the Devil.

Dunstan was a favorite at court, in the reign of King Edmund. Enemies were plentiful, however, and they spread the report that Dunstan evoked demoniac aid in his almost magical work in its many departments. It was said that occasionally the evil spirits were too aggravating, and that in such cases Dunstan would stand no nonsense. There is an old verse:

"St. Dunstan, so the story goes,
Once pulled the devil by the nose,
With red hot tongs, which made him roar
That he was heard three miles or more!"

In old portraits, St. Dunstan is represented in full ecclesiastical habit, holding the iron pincers as symbols of his prowess.

Theophilus

Theophilus Presbyter (fl. c. 1070–1125) is the pseudonymous author or compiler of a Latin text containing detailed descriptions of various medieval

arts, a text commonly known as the *Schedula diversarum artium* ("List of various arts") or *De diversis artibus* ("On various arts"), probably first compiled between 1100 and 1120.

The Schedula diversarum artium is the only complete treatise on art to survive from the High Middle Ages. Written under the pseudonym Theophilus, who seems to have been a Benedictine monk, it describes techniques of painting, stained glass, and metalwork, introducing each with a prologue deep in religious significance. Treasured for its rarity, the book also provides a unique look at the kinds of values that medieval viewers and makers sought in their art objects.

The work contains perhaps the earliest reference to oil paint, which aroused great interest as the mention disproved Vasari's myth of Jan van Eyck developing the technique of oil painting in the early 15th century.

WORDS and PHRASES

adamant

Adamant (or adamantine) is a stone, such as a diamond, once believed to be impenetrable or unbreakable in its hardness. Used as an adjective to describe a person, it can mean someone unyielding or inflexible. If you're adamant about a decision you've made, no one can convince you that it was a mistake.

This word's story began in ancient Greece, where philosophers spoke about a legendary unbreakable stone or metal they called adamas (literally, "invincible"). In English, people began to use the word to refer to something that cannot be altered, and then in the twentieth century, it came to be used as an adjective to mean "unyielding as stone."

attercop

Attercop (also spelled 'addercop') means a spider or a peevish, ill-natured person. The word is made up of two parts: "atter," which means poison or venom, and "cop," which is the Middle English word spider.

alloy

An alloy is a mixture, an amalgam, a substance made by combining two or more elements where the primary element is a metal. Most alloys form by

melting the elements together. Upon cooling, an alloy crystallizes into a solid, intermetallic compound, or mixture that cannot be separated using a physical method. Although an alloy may contain metalloids or nonmetals, it displays the properties of a metal and may have properties that differ from those of the pure elements such as increased strength or hardness.

Brass, for example, is an alloy of zinc and copper. If you have a ring that is marked "18K gold," it is an alloy comprised of 75% gold, 12.5% copper, and 12.5% silver.

balas

A balas is a rose-red to orange spinel used as a semiprecious gem, once confused with the ruby. However, balas rubies were prized by royalty for centuries.

Spinel is a hard crystalline mineral. Its name comes from the Latin word *spinella*, a diminutive form of spine, in reference to its pointed crystals.

Spinels are beautiful, durable gemstones that occur in various colors, including deep reds that rival rubies and cobalt blues that rival sapphires. For centuries, red spinel was considered a type of ruby: a "balas ruby."

Gemologists now distinguish spinel and corundum as distinct gem species. Ruby is the red variety of corundum, and the presence of chromium impurities creates its red color. All other varieties of corundum are called sapphires, with various impurities creating other colors like blue, purple, and pink. Colorless corundum, without impurities, is considered white sapphire.

cameo

A cameo is a form of glyptography (bas-relief carving, or relief sculpture) which historically features landscapes, portraits, and mythological figures carved into a variety of materials, but often into glass, hardstones like sardonyx, and shells. Cameo artworks were crafted to create at least two layers on one piece of material, the top of which protruded from its background, creating a multi-dimensional artwork. These detailed reliefs were often used to adorn pieces of jewelry, such as brooches, necklaces, bracelets, and rings. Cameos of sculptured agates, carnelians, and onyx stones were popular.

A "cameo" can also mean a brief literary piece that brings into delicate or sharp relief the character of a person, place, or event. Or it may be the brief

appearance of a prominent actor or celebrity, as in a single scene of a motion picture.

Cameo-cutting and gem engraving has always been accomplished partly by means of a drill. The deepest point to be reached in the cutting would be punctured first, and then the surfaces cut, chipped, and ground away until the desired level was attained. This is on much the same principle as that adopted by marble cutters to-day. In the *Guild of the Masters of Wood and Stone* in Florence, the cameo-cutters found a place. Nevertheless it seems more fitting to include them among jewelers rather than carvers.

The art of cameo traveled between the Ancient Mediterranean cultures through trade routes connecting Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and often depicted mythological themes while paying tribute to their respective gods and goddesses. As the Roman Empire grew, cameo carvers began to incorporate political portraits into their artwork.

The ruins of Pompeii (discovered in 1748) gave carvers a unique opportunity to use new materials. Petrified lava cameos began to be sold as souvenirs for tourists.

An enormous antique cameo, measuring over 9 inches across, may be seen in Vienna; it represents the Apotheosis of Augustus, and the scene is cut in two rows of spirited figures. It dates from the first century C. E.

carbuncle

Carbuncle is another name for a deep red almandine gemstone that has been cut with a smooth, convex face in a method called cabochon. Traditionally, the term referred to any red gemstone, most often a red garnet.

A carbuncle can also be a painful localized bacterial infection of the skin and subcutaneous tissue that usually has several openings through which pus is discharged. But we certainly don't want to go there.

In South American mining folklore, the carbuncle is a small, elusive, legendary animal containing a mirror, shining gemstones, or riches like gold. According to the *Book of Imaginary Beings*, "nobody ever saw it well enough to know whether it was a bird or a mammal, whether it had feathers or fur."

The Chilote (or Chilota) mythology is formed by the myths, legends and beliefs of the people who live in the Chile Archipelago, in the south of Chile. In this mythology, the carbuncle is variously described as a green-red shining animal, or a small nocturnal herbivore with luminous gems, believed to come

from the brains of dragons, embedded in its forehead. Some say it is a flame that is the "guardian of the metals." We wouldn't mind getting into mythology but, for now, prefer to stick with jewelry.

In one of the mythical Prester John's architectural wonders there is "a carbuncle of such size as a large amphora, by which the palace is illuminated as the world is illuminated by the sun."

The garnet, a deep red gemstone, has been used in jewelry for millennia — as early as the Bronze Age — and is considered a carbuncle when it is cut into a smooth, rounded shape and is polished. During Medieval times, people believed that carbuncles contained magical and mystical properties that were highly desirable. It was also believed that carbuncles contained healing capabilities and that they helped resolve emotional issues between people, in particular between romantic partners. During the Victorian Era, carbuncles rose in popularity and were a common stone found on pendants and brooches.

coronation ring

The coronation (or sovereign's) ring is sometimes called the "wedding ring of England." Historian Anna Keay notes, "When asked about her failure to take a husband, Elizabeth I pointed to her coronation ring and said she was married to the realm of England."

For centuries, a new coronation ring was made for each sovereign to wear and keep as a personal possession. Few of the older rings survive, however. The practice of making new rings for each coronation ended in the 1830s, and since then, the Sovereign's Ring made for William IV has been used by each new monarch.

crown

A crown is an ornamental circlet or head covering, often made of precious metal set with jewels and worn as a symbol of sovereignty. The word is therefore used as shorthand for the power, position, or empire of a monarch, or of a state governed by constitutional monarchy. "Crown" can also mean a reward of victory or mark of honor and, finally, as "the highest part," such as of a mountain, a tree, a hat, or a tooth.

The crown of King Alfred the Great is mentioned in an old inventory as being of "gould wire worke, sett with slight stones, and two little bells." A diadem is described by William of Malmsbury, "so precious with jewels, that the splendour ... threw sparks of light so strongly on the beholder, that the more

steadfastly any person endeavoured to gaze, so much the more he was dazzled, and compelled to avert the eyes."

The famous Crown Jewels of the United Kingdom are a collection of royal ceremonial objects kept in the Tower of London.

Use of regalia by monarchs in England can be traced back to the Early Middle Ages. A permanent set of coronation regalia, once belonging to Edward the Confessor (1003 - 1066), was established after he was made a saint in the 12th century. Most of the collection dates from around 1660. The medieval and Tudor regalia had either been sold or melted down after the monarchy was abolished in 1649 during the English Civil War. Only four original items predate the Restoration: a late 12th-century anointing spoon (the oldest object) and three early 17th-century swords.

The regalia contain 23,578 gemstones, among them Cullinan I (530 carats, the largest clear cut diamond in the world), set in the Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross. It was cut from the largest gem-quality rough diamond ever found, the eponymous Cullinan, discovered in South Africa in 1905 and presented to Edward VII. In the Imperial State Crown are Cullinan II (317 carats), the Stuart Sapphire, St Edward's Sapphire, and the Black Prince's Ruby — a large red spinel. The Koh-I-Noor diamond (105 carats) was acquired by Queen Victoria from the Sikh Empire and has featured on three consort crowns.

Prick spurs remade for Charles II are presented to the monarch. They are made of solid gold, richly embossed with floral patterns and scrolls, and have crimson velvet straps embroidered in gold. Both necks terminate in a Tudor rose with a spike at its center. Also known as St. George's Spurs, they are emblems of knighthood and chivalry, and denote the sovereign's role as head of the armed forces. Gold spurs are first known to have been used in 1189 at the coronation of Richard I, and this element of the service was probably inspired by the initiation ceremony of knights.

A collection of crowns, called the Treasure of Guarrazar, was found in Spain, is an archeological dig. It was composed of twenty-six votive crowns and gold crosses that had originally been offered to the Roman Catholic Church by the Kings of the Visigoths in the seventh century in Hispania. The crowns are glorious with precious stones, but not meant to be worn by the kings. They were gifts to the church, to be hung above the altar.

crystal

Crystal is a mineral, especially a transparent form of quartz (rock crystal), having a crystalline structure, often characterized by external planar faces.

The word also refers to a clear, colorless glass of superior quality and the objects made from it. Glass has a non-crystalline, amorphous atomic structure and, although glassmakers can pour and harden glass into geometric shapes, its atomic structure remains unchanged. People commonly refer to glassware such as this as crystal. But, scientifically speaking, these objects aren't crystals.

The word crystal derives from Ancient Greek, meaning both "ice" and "rock crystal," from *kruos*, "icy cold, frost."

Examples of large crystals include snowflakes, diamonds, and table salt. Most inorganic solids are not crystals but polycrystals, i.e. many microscopic crystals fused together into a single solid. Polycrystals include most metals, rocks, ceramics, and ice. A third category of solids is amorphous solids, such as glass, wax, and many plastics.

Crystals found in rocks typically range in size from a fraction of a millimeter to several centimeters across, although exceptionally large crystals are occasionally found. As of 1999, the world's largest known naturally occurring crystal is a crystal of beryl from Madagascar, 59 feet long and 11 feet in diameter, and weighing 840,000 lbs.

Most crystals have natural origins. They can form through inorganic means, such as geological processes within the earth. Others form through organic processes within living creatures. For example, some human kidney stones consist in part of weddellite crystals. Weddellite occurs at the bottom of the Weddell Sea near Antarctica. It can also be found passing very painfully through urinary tracts.

Man-made crystals are produced from a melody of quartz, lead oxide, and soda potash. These have much more color and brilliance than natural rock crystal.

Crystals are considered ancient forms of medicine, philosophies derived from Buddhism and Hinduism. But there's no scientific evidence to support the use of crystals for healing purposes.

damascene

Damascening is the art of inlaying different metals into one another—typically, gold or silver into a darkly oxidized steel background—to produce intricate patterns similar to niello. The English term comes from a perceived resemblance to the rich tapestry patterns of damask silk. As its name suggests,

damascene gets its name from Damascus, Syria, and the ancient artisans who created and exported this craft.

episcopal ring

The word "episcopal" means of or relating to a bishop.

The use of episcopal rings has been dated to the seventh century. At the ordination of a bishop in the Episcopal Church, a ring, staff, and miter, or other suitable insignia of office was presented to the newly-ordained bishop. Modern episcopal rings are often made of gold and ornamented with an amethyst. The episcopal ring is usually worn on the ring-finger of the bishop's right hand. Similar rings are worn by abbots and some abbesses.

One 13th century bishop's ring has the typical combination of a gold setting with a single, large stone, in this case malachite. The gold is decorated with openwork eagles, animal heads, and floral elements. The malachite is probably meant to resemble "toadstone," a green stone said to be found on the head of a toad and believed to have healing qualities. These rings had to be large as bishops normally wore them over gloves on the third finger of the right hand.

Episcopal rings were originally made of sapphires, said to be typical of the cold austerity of the life of the wearer. Later, however, the carbuncle became a favorite, which was supposed to suggest fiery zeal for the faith. Perhaps the compromise of the now customary amethyst, being a combination of the blue and the red, may typify a blending of more human qualities.

fibula

A fibula is a brooch or pin for fastening garments, typically at the right shoulder. The fibula developed in a variety of shapes, but all were based on the safety pin principle. Modern brooches are meant to be decorative. Fibulae originally served a practical function: to fasten clothing for both sexes, such as dresses and cloaks.

There are hundreds of different types of fibulae. Fibulae replaced straight pins that were used to fasten clothing in the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age. In turn, fibulae were replaced as clothing fasteners by buttons in the Middle Ages. Their descendant, the modern safety pin, remains in use today.

Most fibulae are made of bronze (more properly "copper alloy") or iron, or both. Some fibulae are made of precious metals such as silver or gold. Most

fibulae are made of only one or two pieces. Many fibulae are decorated with enamel, semi-precious stones, glass, coral or bone.

In ancient Rome and other places where Latin was used, the same word denoted both a brooch and the fibula bone because a popular form for brooches and the shape of the bone were thought to resemble one another. Roman soldiers wore them to hold a cloak or cape in place.

filigree

Filigree is ornamental openwork of delicate or intricate design, especially of fine gold, silver, or copper wire intricately interlaced or bent into rosettes, spirals, scrolls, or vines and applied chiefly to gold and silver surfaces.

Archaeological finds in ancient Mesopotamia indicate that filigree was incorporated into jewelry since 3,000 BCE. The art was advanced to its highest perfection in the Greek and Etruscan filigree of the 6th to the 3rd centuries BCE. The English word filigree is shortened from the earlier use of filigreen which derives from Latin *filum* meaning thread and granum meaning grain, in the sense of "small bead."

The wire comes in one of several different forms, including plaited or twisted, or it may be plain. There are two types of filigree generally used in jewelry. The first of these involves soldering the gold or silver wire to a separate metal base. The second type involves creating an openwork design with the filigree wire, without using a separate metal backing. It often suggests lace and remains popular in Asian metalwork.

In many collections of medieval jewel work, there are reliquaries, covers for Gospel books, etc., made in Constantinople from the 6th to the 12th centuries, or in monasteries in Europe, in which monks studied and imitated Byzantine goldsmiths' work. These objects, besides being enriched with precious stones, polished, but not cut into facets, and with enamels, are often decorated with filigree. Large surfaces of gold are sometimes covered with scrolls of filigree soldered on. Corner pieces of the borders of book covers, or the panels of reliquaries, are frequently made up of complicated pieces of plaited work alternating with spaces encrusted with enamel.

Irish filigree is varied by numerous designs by which one thread can be traced through curious knots and complications, which, disposed over large surfaces, balance one another, but always with special varieties and arrangements difficult to trace with the eye. The long thread appears and disappears without breach of continuity, the two ends generally worked into the head and the tail of a serpent or a monster.

fret

As a verb, fret means to decorate with interlaced designs, or to enrich with embossed or pierced carved patterns. Or to fuss because there's a big test coming up, for example.

As a noun, a fret is an ornamental network, especially a medieval metallic or jeweled net for a woman's headdress. It can also mean the fog that rolls in from the sea.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the women wore in their hair nets composed of gold threads adorned with pearls. A fret of pearls was considered a sufficient legacy for a duchess to leave to her daughter.

Hebrew ring

The Seal of Solomon is the legendary signet ring attributed to king Solomon in medieval mystical traditions, from which it developed in parallel within Jewish and Islamic mysticism and Western occultism. It is first mentioned by the first-century Jewish historian Josephus.

The ring is often depicted in the shape of either a pentagram or a hexagram. In mystic Islamic and Jewish lore, the ring is variously described as having given Solomon the power to command the supernatural, and also the ability to speak with animals. Due to the proverbial wisdom of Solomon, it came to be seen as an amulet or talisman, or a symbol or character in medieval magic. The seal is the predecessor to the Star of David, a Jewish symbol.

jacinth

Jacinth (or jacynth) is the variety of zircon prized for its vibrant colors of yellow-red to red-brown. It is considered one of the oldest minerals on Earth, with some zircon crystals dating back more than 4.4 billion years. These ancient zircons are valuable to scientists for dating the Earth's geological history.

Zircon comes in various colors, such as blue, green, yellow, gold, and in hyacinth (or jacinth), meaning the orange-red to brownish-red variety. Colorless zircon is often used as a diamond substitute and is valued for its brilliance. Green zircon is extremely rare, thus highly coveted. Blue zircon is also much sought after for its vivid and attractive hue. Zircon is used in all

types of jewelry, both as center stones and accent stones. It is often used as an alternative to more expensive gemstones like diamonds or sapphires.

The ancient zircon now has competition from cubic zirconia, first discovered in the 1930s, but so rare that scientists have learned how to synthesize it. Man-made cubic zirconia doesn't have the brilliance of zircons, but it is harder, cheaper, and more durable. It's usually created in a clear form, but also sometimes in color, such as a pink gem known as Pink Ice. Cubic zirconia has excellent clarity and, like zircons, is very similar to diamonds.

In the Middle Ages, jacinth was believed to possess protective and healing properties. It was used as a talisman to ward off evil spirits, enhance the intellect, and promote wisdom. It also induced sleep in cases of insomnia. Bed linen was often embroidered and set with bits of jacinth.

In certain mythologies, jacinth was associated with mythical creatures and beings. For example, in ancient Greece, jacinth was sometimes linked to the mythological figure Hyacinthus, a handsome youth loved by the god Apollo. According to the myth, the blood of Hyacinthus was transformed into the hyacinth flower, named in his honor. Although the hyacinth flower is different from the gemstone jacinth, the association between the two has persisted in cultural references.

lapidary or glyptics

"Lapidary" is the art of shaping stone, minerals, or gemstones into decorative items such as cabochons, engraved gems (including cameos), and faceted designs. A person who practices lapidary is a lapidarist. A lapidarist uses the lapidary techniques of cutting, grinding, and polishing. Lapidarist may also mean a dealer in precious or semiprecious stones. The earliest known lapidary work likely occurred during the Stone Age.

"Glyptics" means the same as "lapidary," the art of engraving or carving, especially on precious stones. It comes from the Greek word *glyptikós*, but its first known use in English is circa 1818.

The Latin word for "stone" is *lapis*, which is the term for a semi-precious, deep blue gem also known as lapis lazuli, or "stone of the sky." In the 1300s, lapidary referred to a cutter, polisher, or engraver of precious stones, as well as to the art of such a person. The refined work of a lapidary eventually led, centuries later, to the use of lapidary as an adjective describing things that have the elegance and precision of inscriptions carved in stone monuments. Today it is used most often to characterize speech or prose (such as an essay or address) that is considered notably clear and fine, but lapidary can also

describe virtues such as grace and dignity, whether observed in one's language or character.

Lapidary was also a significant tradition in early Mesoamerica. The lapidary products were used as status symbols, for offerings, and during burials. They were made from shell, jade, turquoise, and greenstones. Aztec lapidarists used string saws and drills made of reed and bone as their lapidary tools.

Medieval lapidaries were deeply embedded in the practice of lithotherapy, the belief in the healing properties of stones. John M. Riddle's analysis of lithotherapy in the Middle Ages emphasizes the medical role lapidaries played, particularly in guiding the use of gemstones for healing. These texts described how different stones, often categorized by color, composition, and astrological associations, could be used to treat specific ailments. Riddle points out that medieval lapidaries were often considered legitimate medical texts, consulted by physicians and healers to guide treatment practices.

meander

In everyday language, the verb meander means to follow a winding or intricate course, or to wander aimlessly. The word comes from Greek *Maiandros*, an old name for a winding river in Asia Minor that is now known as the Menderes.

In the art world, however, the noun "meander" is a decorative border constructed from a continuous line, shaped into a repeated motif. Such a design may also be called the Greek fret or Greek key design. Usually the term is used for motifs with straight lines and right angles. The many versions with rounded shapes are called running scrolls or, following the etymological origin of the term, may be identified as water wave motifs.

In ancient Greece, meanders appear in many architectural friezes, and in bands on the pottery of ancient Greece from the Geometric period onward. Meanders are also commonly found on the pavement mosaics found in Roman villas throughout the Roman empire. Today, the design is often used as a decorative motif for borders for many printed materials.

A meander motif also appears in prehistoric Mayan design motifs in the western hemisphere, centuries before any European contacts.

Why is it called the key pattern? Many think that a small section of the pattern in isolation resembles a rudimentary, traditional key. The unbroken, interlocking pattern turned it into a symbol of both unity and infinity. A labyrinth can be created using the repeating patterns of a Greek key.

The Greek Key has been symbolically used in jewelry for centuries.

Peacock Throne of Delhi

Probably the most colossal jewel of ancient times was the Peacock Throne of Delhi. It was in the form of two spread tails of peacocks, composed entirely of sapphires, emeralds and topazes, feather by feather and eye by eye, set so as to touch each other. A life-sized parrot, carved from a single emerald, stood between the peacocks.

Shah Jahan ruled in what is now termed the Golden Age of the vast Mughal Empire, which covered almost all of the Indian subcontinent. The emperor was the focus around which everything else revolved. Like Solomon's throne, his Peacock Throne was to be covered in gold and jewels, with steps leading up to it, with the ruler floating above the ground and closer to heaven. It took the imperial goldsmiths seven years to complete this new throne. More than 2,500 pounds of gold and 500 pounds of precious gemstones were used, creating a masterpiece of artistry unsurpassed before or since. Yet it was an opulent indulgence that could be seen only by a few courtiers, aristocrats, and visiting dignitaries. The throne was supremely extravagant, costing twice as much as the construction of the Taj Mahal.

Tragically, the Peacock Throne's splendor was short-lived. In 1739, Nadir Shah of Iran invaded Delhi and seized the throne as a symbol of his victory over the declining Mughal Empire. Following Nadir Shah's assassination in1747, the throne was dismantled by looters, its precious gems scattered to the winds of history.

perry

During the Medieval period, filigree or chain work was termed "perry." In old papers such as inventories, registers, and the like, there are frequent mentions of buttons of "gold and perry." In 1372, Aline Gerbuge received "one little circle of gold and perry, emeralds and balasses."

But that meaning has passed out of existence. Nowadays, "perry" means a fermented, often effervescent beverage made from pears.

posie ring

Posie rings (sometimes spelled posy, posey or poesy rings) are gold finger

rings with a short inscription usually on the inner surface. They were popular during the latter half of the Medieval period in both England and France as lovers' gifts and were sometimes used as engagement or wedding rings. The quotations were often from contemporary courtship stories or chapbooks.

A favorite "posie" was
"The love is true
That I O U."

A motto in a ring owned by Lady Cathcart was inscribed on the occasion of her fourth marriage. With laudable ambition, she observes,
"If I survive,
I will have five."

In medieval times, when religion was very much a part of everyday life, it was common for saints' figures or religious text to appear on the rings alongside romantic expressions. In this way, a ring functioned both as a religious talisman and a gift of love.

Tara brooch

The Tara brooch is an Irish Celtic brooch, dated to the early 8th century, and is made from bronze, silver and gold. The brooch is a perfect museum in itself of the jeweler's art. It is ornamented with enamel, with jewels set in silver, amber, scroll filigree, fine chains, Celtic tracery, and molded glass. Nearly every branch of the art — seventy-six different kinds of workmanship — is represented in this one treasure, making the brooch the most complex and ornate of its kind. The decoration and ornamentation are so detailed and minute that parts can only be fully seen using magnification, leading to one 19th-century critic writing that it was "more like the work of fairies than of human beings."

A silver chain made of plaited wire is attached to the brooch by means of a swivel. This feature is formed of animal heads framing two tiny cast glass human heads.

Gilt and silver zoomorphic brooches were status symbols in Early Medieval Ireland and Britain. The format is derived from the earlier tradition of torcs and gorgets (both types of neck-rings). By the 7th century, Irish kings had adopted the late Roman Empire use of brooches to fulfill this purpose. Positioning them below the right shoulder was another tradition that originated from the Romans, whose military placed it there so as to keep the cloak on the left and not impede access to the sword.

Along with such treasures as the Ardagh Chalice and the Derrynaflan Paten, the Tara Brooch can be considered to represent the pinnacle of early medieval Irish metalworkers' achievement. Each individual element of decoration is executed perfectly.

FOOD for THOUGHT
(quotes from the book)

In the Isle of Man there was once a law that any girl who had been wronged by a man had the right to redress herself in one of three ways: she was given a sword, a rope and a ring, and she could decide whether she would behead him, hang him, or marry him. Tradition states that the ring was almost invariably the weapon chosen by the lady.

Bartholomew Anglicus regarding crystal: "Men trowe that it is of snow or ice made hard in many years. Water is of itself fleeting, but by strength of cold it is turned and made stedfast crystal."

Among the treasures of art-loving Henry III was a "great cameo" in a golden case; it was then worth two hundred pounds. (Henry lived from 1207–1272. How much would that cameo be worth today?)

According to Benvenuto Cellini, there are only four precious stones: he says they are made "by the four elements, ruby by fire, sapphire by air, emerald by earth, and diamond by water."

Celtic Fairy Tales

Celtic Fairy Tales is the first of two volumes of Celtic folk tales, collected by the leading British folklorist Joseph Jacobs, which introduced the world to the unique magic of the Celtic imagination. The twenty-six stories in this first volume have wonderful characters, rich language, magic, and humor. There are fairies, elves, giants, goblins, and other magical beings as well as heroics, adventure, and romance. The stories are gathered from Celtic individuals and have been told over and over through many generations, some of them for well-nigh a thousand years. Many of these stories have a moral, but they mainly rely on cunning and wit to entertain the reader. There's a sly wink and nod around every corner.

About the Author:
Joseph Jacobs (1854–1916) was an Australian folklorist, literary critic, historian, and writer of English literature who became a notable collector and publisher of folklore. His work popularized some of the world's best-known versions of English fairy tales including such gems as *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. He went on to publish fairy tales collected from continental Europe as well as Jewish, Celtic, and Indian fairy tales which made him one of the most popular writers of fairytales in the English language. Jacobs was also an editor for journals and books on the subject of folklore which included editing the *Fables of Bidpai* and the *Fables of Aesop*, as well as articles on the migration of Jewish folklore. He also edited editions of *The Thousand and One Nights*. Jacobs came to be regarded as one of the foremost experts on English folklore.

About fairy tales and myths:
(By Joseph Campbell, author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*)

Celtic fairy myths and legends are more than just imaginative stories. In my experience, they're a captivating fusion of cultural insights, historical background, and intricate metaphysical ideas. These tales, rich with nature, magic, and the otherworldly, provide a window into Celtic views on life, death, and the universe.

From playful leprechauns to eerie banshees, each fairy character unveils a unique facet of ancient Celtic philosophies and principles. By delving into these stories, we can uncover profound truths about human existence and our innate quest to comprehend our world.

Instead of dismissing them as mere fabrications, let's view them as portals into a bygone era. To the Celts, fairies were not merely whimsical creatures – they were integral to their understanding of life and the cosmos.

Take, for example, the mischievous leprechaun. Far from being a mere trickster, this fairy embodies the Celtic value of cleverness and the importance of not taking life too seriously. On the other hand, the wailing banshee serves as a poignant reminder of the inevitability of death and the transient nature of life.

Understanding these tales is more than an academic exercise – it's a journey into the heart of what it means to be human.

Immersing ourselves in the enthralling universe of Celtic fairy folklore, we unearth a mesmerizing domain teeming with magical beings like the Aos Sí. In Irish lore, these fairies are thought to be the metamorphosed deities of the ancient Tuatha Dé Danann. They reside in an alternate dimension, the Otherworld, an existence akin to our own.

This intricate web of Irish mythology and folklore gives substance to our fairy tales, fueling our imagination with adventurous narratives of their deeds. The Otherworld is a spectral dimension believed to be intertwined with ours. According to Irish folklore, fairy trees and forts function as portals to this mystical realm.

By understanding the depth and intricacy of these legends, we come to appreciate the rich cultural heritage of the Irish. This realm is a vibrant world, filled with unique characters and tales that have been passed down through generations.

—Banshees: Their chilling cries are synonymous with omens of impending doom. Their eerie wails echo through the pages of Celtic folklore, painting a haunting picture.

—Leprechauns: It seems that these mischievous tricksters are always up to no good. Infamous for their deep fascination with gold, they're sure to give you a run for your money – quite literally!

—Pookas: These elusive shape-shifters are known to bring both fortune and misfortune. Their unpredictable nature makes them intriguing characters.

The vibrant folklore of Celtic fairies is steeped in rich history, showcasing a tapestry of enchanting tales about human encounters with these magical beings. The ancient Celts held a profound belief in the Daoine Sidhe – a magical race cohabiting our world in parallel fairy realms. These mystical

realms weave a captivating narrative of shared existence, mutual respect, and cautionary tales between humans and the fairy world.

Our journey into the world of Celtic fairies is not only a dive into the annals of history, but also an exploration of the human psyche and its capacity for belief in the supernatural. By delving into these narratives, we can gain a richer understanding of our shared cultural heritage and the enduring allure of the magical fairy realm.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Aos Sí

"Aos sí" is the Irish name for a supernatural race in Celtic mythology —"daoine sìth" in Scottish Gaelic—comparable to fairies or elves. They are descended from the Tuatha Dé Danann, meaning the 'People of the Goddess Danu,' according to pagan tradition.

The aos sí are said to live underground in fairy forts, across the Western sea, or in an invisible world that co-exists with the world of humans. This world is described as a parallel universe in which the aos sí walk among the living. These people of the mounds are variously said to be ancestors, the spirits of nature, or goddesses and gods.

The "sídhe" are the hills or mounds that dot the Irish landscape. In a number of later English-language texts, the word sídhe is incorrectly used both for the mounds and the people of the mounds. However, in older texts the word refers specifically to "the palaces, courts, halls, or residences" of the otherworldly beings that supposedly inhabit them. The fact that many of these sídhe have been found to be ancient burial mounds has contributed to the theory that the aos sí were the pre-Celtic occupants of Ireland.

In folk belief and practice, the aos sí are often appeased with offerings and care is taken to avoid angering or insulting them. Often, they are not named directly, but rather spoken of as "The Good Neighbors," "The Fair Folk," or simply "The Folk." The most common names for them are aos sí, aes sídhe, daoine sídhe, and daoine sìth. Daoine sith means literally, "people of the mounds." The aos sí are generally described as stunningly beautiful, though they can also be terrible and hideous.

Aos sí are seen as fierce guardians of their abodes—whether a fairy hill, a fairy ring, a special tree (often a hawthorn), or a particular loch or wood. It is

believed that infringing on these spaces will cause the aos sí to retaliate in an effort to remove the people or objects that invaded their homes. Many of these tales contribute to the changeling myth in west European folklore, with the aos sí kidnapping trespassers or replacing their children with changelings as a punishment for transgressions.

The aos sí are often connected to certain times of year and hours; as the Gaelic Otherworld is believed to come closer to the mortal world during the hours of dusk and dawn, the aos sí correspondingly become easier to encounter. Some festivals such as Samhain, Beltane and Midsummer are also associated with the aos sí.

Erin

"Erin" is another name for Ireland. According to Irish mythology and folklore, the name was originally given to the island by the Milesians to honor the goddess Ériu.

The Milesians (or sons of Míl) are the final race to settle in Ireland, according to medieval Irish Christian history. The Milesians represent the Irish people. They are Gaels who sail to Ireland from Iberia (Hispania). When they land in Ireland, they contend with the Tuatha Dé Danann, who represent the Irish pantheon of gods. The two groups agree to divide Ireland between them: the Milesians take the world above, while the Tuath Dé take the world below (the Otherworld).

Poets and nineteenth-century Irish nationalists used Erin in English as a romantic name for Ireland. Often, "Erin's Isle" was used. In this context, along with Hibernia, Erin is the name given to the female personification of Ireland, but the name was rarely used as a given name in those times, probably because no saints, queens, or literary figures were ever called Erin.

The phrase "Erin go bragh," a slogan associated with the United Irishmen Rebellion of 1798, is often translated as "Ireland forever." The songs *Let Erin Remember* and *Érin grá mo chroí* are more examples of the word's usage in Irish romantic nationalism.

Tuatha Dé Danann

The Tuatha Dé Danann, meaning "the folk of the goddess Danu," also known by the earlier name Tuath Dé ("tribe of the gods"), are a supernatural race in Irish mythology. Many of them are thought to represent deities of pre-Christian Gaelic Ireland. The Tuath Dé eventually became the aes sídhe, the

sídhe-folk or "fairies" of later folklore. Several of the Tuath Dé are cognate with ancient Celtic deities: Lugh with Lugus, Brigit with Brigantia, Nuada with Nodons, and Ogma with Ogmios.

The Tuath Dé are skilled in art and science, poetry and magic, and are often depicted as kings, queens, druids, bards, warriors, heroes, healers and craftsmen who have supernatural powers. They dwell in the Otherworld but interact with humans and the human world. They are associated with the sídhe, prominent ancient burial mounds which are entrances to Otherworld realms.

Medieval texts about the Tuath Dé were written by Christians. Sometimes they explained the Tuath Dé as fallen angels who were neither wholly good nor evil, or ancient people who became highly skilled in magic, but several writers acknowledged that some of them had been gods. Some have multiple names, but in the tales, they often appear to be different characters. Originally, these probably represented different aspects of the same deity, while others were regional names.

The Tuatha Dé Danann are described as a supernatural race, much like idealized humans, who are immune from ageing and sickness, and who have powers of magic. The powers most often attributed to the Tuath Dé are control over the weather and the elements, and the ability to shapeshift themselves and other things. They are also said to control the fertility of the land.

They live in the Otherworld, which is described as either a parallel world or a heavenly land beyond the sea or under the earth's surface. Many of them are associated with specific places in the landscape, especially the sídh mounds, the ancient burial mounds and passage tombs which are entrances to Otherworld realms. The Tuath Dé can hide themselves with a *féth fíada* ('magic mist') and appear to humans only when they wish to.

In the Otherworld, the Danann are seemingly immortal in the sense that they can live a very long life and remain young, but they can be killed and destroyed, just like a mortal.

There were frequent visits of the Dananns with the mortals. Sometimes they aided mortals, while at other times they sought their destruction. Sometimes they intermarried. Most of the time, the Dananns would come to the surface and meet their lovers; other times the mortals were allowed to live with them.

It should be noted that the fairies in Celtic myths (especially Irish, Welsh, and Arthurian myths) have nothing to do with the tiny pixies with wings found in folklore and children's fairy tales, like Tinker Bell in *Peter Pan* or the Fairy

Godmother in *Cinderella*. Modern interpretations of fairies tend to prettify them.

In early Irish and Welsh literature, they could be tall or short, beautiful or ugly. They could be benevolent, but at other times frighteningly cruel or malign. The Morrigan and Morgan le Fay would not be considered fairies in the modern sense.

Hill of Uisneach

The Hill of Uisneach or Ushnagh is a hill and ancient ceremonial site in the barony of Rathconrath in County Westmeath, Ireland. It is a protected national monument. It consists of numerous monuments and earthworks—prehistoric and medieval—including a probable megalithic tomb, burial mounds, enclosures, standing stones, holy wells and a medieval road. Uisneach is near the geographical center of Ireland, and in Irish mythology it is deemed to be the symbolic and sacred center of the island.

It was said to be the burial place of the mythical Tuatha Dé Danann, and a place of assembly associated with the druids and the festival of Beltane.

Cú Chulainn

Cú Chulainn is an Irish warrior hero and demigod in the Ulster Cycle of Irish mythology, as well as in Scottish and Manx folklore. He is believed to be an incarnation of the Irish god Lugh, who is also his father. His mother is the mortal Deichtine, sister of king Conchobar mac Nessa.

After Cú Chulainn's birth, the nobles of Ulster argue over which of them is to be his foster father, until the wise Morann decides he should be fostered by several of them: Conchobar, who may be the father; Sencha mac Ailella, who will teach him judgement and eloquent speech; the wealthy Blaí Briugu, who will protect and provide for him; the noble warrior Fergus mac Róich, who will care for him and teach him to protect the weak; the poet Amergin, who will educate him, and Amergin's wife, Findchóem, who will nurse him. He is brought up in the house of Amergin and Findchóem on Muirthemne Plain in modern County Louth, alongside their son Conall Cernach.

He gained the name Cú Chulainn as a child, after killing Culann's fierce guard dog in self defense and offering to take its place until a replacement could be reared. Hence, he became the "Hound (cú) of Culann." Although cú literally means "hound," it was also a common figurative term for a warrior in early Irish literature, thus the name can also mean "Culann's warrior."

Cú Chulainn was trained in martial arts and it was prophesied that his great deeds would gain him everlasting fame, but a short life. He is known for his terrifying battle frenzy, in which he becomes a monster who knows neither friend nor foe. He fights from his chariot, driven by his loyal charioteer Láeg and drawn by his horses, Liath Macha and Dub Sainglend.

The man's feats of strength and anger befit a hero or a god. After one event, the Ulstermen wrestle him into a barrel of cold water, which explodes from the heat of his body. They put him in a second barrel, which boils, and a third, which warms to a pleasant temperature.

At the age of seventeen, Cú Chulainn single-handedly defends Ulster from the army of Connacht. Medb, queen of Connacht, has mounted the invasion to steal the stud bull Donn Cúailnge. Cú Chulainn allows her to take Ulster by surprise because he was with a woman when he should have been watching the border. The men of Ulster were disabled by a curse that caused them to suffer from labor pains, so it becomes Cú Chulainn's job to stop Medb's army from advancing further. He does this by invoking the right of single combat at fords. He defeats champion after champion in a standoff that lasts for months.

Before one combat, a beautiful young woman comes to him, claiming to be the daughter of a king, and offers him her love, but he refuses her. The woman reveals herself as the Morrigan, and in revenge for this insult, she attacks him in various animal forms while he is engaged in combat against Lóch mac Mofemis. As an eel, she trips him in the ford, but he breaks her ribs. As a wolf, she stampedes cattle across the ford, but he blinds her eye with a sling stone. Finally, she appears as a heifer at the head of the stampede, but he breaks her leg with another sling stone. After Cú Chulainn finally defeats Lóch, the Morrigan appears to him as an old woman milking a cow, with the same injuries he had given her in her animal forms. She gives him three drinks of milk, and with each drink he blesses her, healing her wounds.

Cú Chulainn has many lovers, but his wife Emer's only jealousy comes when he falls in love with Fand, wife of Manannán mac Lir. Manannán has left her and she has been attacked by three Fomorians who want to control the Irish Sea. Cú Chulainn agrees to help defend her as long as she marries him. She agrees reluctantly, but they fall in love when they meet. Manannán knows their relationship is doomed because Cú Chulainn is mortal and Fand is a fairy; Cú Chulainn's presence would destroy the fairies. Emer, meanwhile, tries to kill her rival, but when she sees the strength of Fand's love for Cú Chulainn she decides to give him up to her. Fand, touched by Emer's magnanimity, decides to return to her own husband. Manannán shakes his cloak between Cú Chulainn and Fand, ensuring the two will never meet again, and Cú Chulainn and Emer drink a potion to wipe the whole affair from their

memories.

Sons of men whom Cú Chulainn has killed conspire to draw him out to his death. His fate is sealed by his breaking of the geasa (taboos) upon him. Cú Chulainn's geasa include a ban against eating dog meat, but in early Ireland there was a powerful general taboo against refusing hospitality, so when an old crone offers him a meal of dog meat, he has no choice but to break his geis. In this way he is spiritually weakened for the fight ahead of him. Lugaid has three magical spears made, and it is prophesied that a king will fall by each of them. With the first he kills Cú Chulainn's charioteer Láeg, king of chariot drivers. With the second he kills Cú Chulainn's horse, Liath Macha, king of horses. With the third he hits Cú Chulainn, mortally wounding him. Cú Chulainn ties himself to a standing stone to die on his feet, facing his enemies. This stone is traditionally identified as Clochafarmore, located near Dundalk. According to the Annals, Cú Chulainn died in the year CE 1.

As to Cú Chulainn's appearance, here is one description:
"And certainly the youth Cúchulainn mac Sualdaim was handsome as he came to show his form to the armies. You would think he had three distinct heads of hair—brown at the base, blood-red in the middle, and a crown of golden yellow. This hair was settled strikingly into three coils on the cleft at the back of his head. Each long loose-flowing strand hung down in shining splendor over his shoulders, deep-gold and beautiful and fine as a thread of gold. A hundred neat red-gold curls shone darkly on his neck, and his head was covered with a hundred crimson threads matted with gems. He had four dimples in each cheek—yellow, green, crimson and blue—and seven bright pupils, eye-jewels, in each kingly eye. Each foot had seven toes and each hand seven fingers, the nails with the grip of a hawk's claw or a gryphon's clench." (*Thomas Kinsella, translator, The Táin, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 156–158*)

The Legend of Knockmany Hill

In this story from the first volume of *Celtic Fairy Stories*, Cú Chulainn is reimagined as an evil giant, called Cucullin, at odds with Finn McCool.

Cucullin was famous everywhere and no man, it was said, had any chance with him in a fight. By one blow of his fists, he flattened a thunderbolt and kept it in his pocket, in the shape of a pancake, to show to all his enemies, when they were about to fight him.

At the beginning of the story, Finn McCool was in Antrim building a bridge to Scotland, heaving great pillars of rock into the sea. This bridge, unfinished at the end of the story, became known as the "Giant's Causeway." One day,

Finn heard that Cucullin was coming to the Causeway to have a trial of strength with him, and he was seized with a very warm and sudden fit of affection for his wife, poor woman, leading a very lonely, uncomfortable life of it in his absence. He accordingly pulled up a fir-tree and having snedded it into a walking-stick, set out on his travels to see his darling Oonagh on the top of Knockmany Hill.

When the terrified Finn arrived on her doorstep, Oonagh agreed to save him from the giant if he promised to obey her every instruction. Much to his consternation, she dressed him in baby clothes and put him into the cradle.

When Cucullin arrived, Oonagh pretended that Finn was away, but would be home very soon. While they waited, she asked Cucullin to perform various tasks. The first was to pick up the house and turn it around so that the wind wouldn't blow through the door.

That done, she then complained that there was no water on the hill and took Cucullin down to see the place where Finn intended to dig a well. It was all one solid rock and, after looking at it for a while, Cucullin cracked his right middle finger nine times, and, stooping down, tore a cleft about four hundred feet deep, and a quarter of a mile in length.

Now Oonagh knew that Cucullin's power was contained in his middle finger. So, she baked griddle cakes, some with griddle irons inside, some without. Cucullin broke his teeth biting through his cake (which had an iron in it) but the baby ate his with no problem (Finn's cake had no iron). In fury and amazement Cucullin stuck his hand into Finn's mouth to see how sharp the baby's teeth were. This allowed Finn to bite his middle finger off and deprive Cucullin of both his strength and size.

We could say that Finn and Oonagh "lived happily ever after" but good stories are not like that. There's always another challenge to keep us enthralled and amazed at the hero's exploits.

Alba

The Kingdom of Scotland (formed by the union of the Picts and Scots) is called Alba for the period between about 900 CE and 1286, during the High Middle Ages.

Scotland has always had a wild beauty. Here is the beginning of a song by the title character in *The Story of Deirdre*:

> Dear is the land, the land over there,
> Alba full of woods and lakes.

Druids

Druids were high-ranking priests in ancient Celtic cultures, religious leaders as well as legal authorities, adjudicators, lorekeepers, medical professionals and political advisors. Druids left no written accounts, for the Celts did not embrace writing until about the fifth century CE. Their beliefs and practices are attested in some detail by their contemporaries from other cultures, such as the Romans and the Greeks.

The earliest known references to the druids date to the 4th century BCE. The oldest detailed description comes from Julius Caesar's *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* (50s BCE). Following the Roman invasion of Gaul, the druid orders were suppressed by the Roman government under the 1st-century CE emperors Tiberius and Claudius, and had disappeared from the written record by the 2nd century.

WORDS AND PHRASES

anoint

"Oh, you anointed villain!" says the ass, roaring like thunder.

Anoint means to put oil or water on a part of someone's body, usually for religious reasons, or to choose someone to do some particular important job.

The term can also mean sprinkling, dousing, or smearing a person with any perfumed oil, milk, or butter. Scented oils are used as perfumes and sharing them is an act of hospitality. Their use to introduce a divine influence or presence is recorded from the earliest times; anointing was thus used as a form of medicine, thought to rid persons and things of dangerous spirits and demons which were believed to cause disease.

None of this appears to apply to the use of the word in the above quote. We can only guess that "anointed villain" means "chosen villain" or "I choose to name you as a villain," or "I choose to insult you."

apparition

An apparition is a ghostly figure, a specter, a supernatural figure, perhaps the

spirit of a dead person appearing in a form that can be seen. It's usually used to describe a sudden or unusual sight.

ass

An ass is any of several hoofed mammals of the genus *Equus*, resembling and closely related to the horse but having a smaller build and longer ears. These include the domesticated donkey, a hardy, sure-footed, gregarious beast of burden.

The word is also used to mean a foolish or stupid person, or the buttocks.

asthore

The term asthore has its roots in the Irish language. It means "my treasure" and has been used in Ireland for centuries.

barony

"My grandfather, Andrew Coffey, was known to the whole barony as a quiet, decent man. And if the whole barony knew him, he knew the whole barony, every inch, hill and dale."

A "barony" can refer to a vast private landholding, but here it means a county or a district, perhaps a village and the surrounding countryside.

besom

When the spell was broken, "some of them were riding on an old besom, and some on a broken stick, and more on a bohalawn or a hemlock-stalk."

A "besom" is a bundle of twigs or straw attached to a handle and used as a broom.

We could not find a definition for "bohalawn" so can only guess that it means some particular variety of stick.

bicker-hole

"He looked in through the bicker-hole on the door-leaf."

A "bicker-hole" is a small peephole, especially in a door. "Door-leaf" merely means door panel, probably the top panel so that one can look through the bickerhole without bending or squatting down.

birredh

"Tom looked a different person with fine clothes and a nice green birredh over his long curly hair."

"…it was told at the Court of Laeré that a strange Druid, in flowered garments, with a two-pointed ornamented birredh on his head…"

A birredh is a hat of some description.

blackthorn

A blackthorn is a thorny shrub or small tree, which produces edible fruits called sloes that are used to make sloe gin and patxaran in Basque Country of Spain and France. The wood is used to make walking sticks, including the Irish shillelagh. Thus it is used as a club or cudgel, typically made from a knotty blackthorn stick with a large knob at the top.

Blackthorn makes an excellent fire wood that burns slowly with a good heat and little smoke. The wood takes a fine polish and is used for tool handles and canes. In the British Army, blackthorn sticks are carried by commissioned officers of the Royal Irish Regiment, a tradition also seen in Irish regiments in some Commonwealth countries.

blessing

Blessing can mean any of the following:
—a short prayer said before or after a meal
—the invoking of God's favor upon a person
—something contributing to happiness or well-being
—something that is extremely lucky
—approval and support

bodach

A bodach is an old man, or rustic, or churl, or lout. Sometimes the word is also used to describe a trickster or bogeyman figure in Gaelic folklore and

mythology.

bog

A bog is a soft, swampy, naturally waterlogged kind of ground made up mostly of decomposing plants, sphagnum mosses, and peat, in which characteristic shrubs and herbs and sometimes trees typically grow. Other names for bogs include mire, quagmire, and muskeg; alkaline mires are called fens.

They are generally found in cooler northern climates and are formed in poorly draining lake basins. Water flowing out of bogs has a characteristic brown color, which comes from dissolved peat tannins. In general, the low fertility and cool climate result in relatively slow plant growth, but decay is even slower due to low oxygen levels in saturated bog soils. Hence, peat accumulates. Large areas of the landscape can be covered many meters deep in peat.

Some bogs have preserved bog-wood, such as ancient oak logs useful in dendrochronology. They have yielded extremely well-preserved bog bodies, with hair, organs, and skin intact, buried there thousands of years ago after apparent Germanic and Celtic human sacrifice.

Céide Fields in County Mayo in Ireland, a 5,000-year-old neolithic farming landscape, has been found preserved under a blanket bog, complete with field walls and hut sites. One ancient artifact found in various bogs is bog butter, large masses of fat, usually in wooden containers. These are thought to have been food stores of both butter and tallow.

boliauns

Boliaun is the Gaelic name for the plant known as regwort or ragweed because of the ragged shape of the leaf.

bonny

"Bonny" is a Scottish dialect word and means beautiful and nice to look at or to be with, as in, "She's a bonny lass." It can also mean to be reckoned with, as in "It cost a bonny penny!" Then there are all those bonny (plump) babies to admire.

bosky

Bosky means having an abundance of bushes, shrubs, or trees.

In Middle English, bosk, busk, and bush were all variant spellings of a word meaning "shrub." Although bush and busk survived into modern English, bosk disappeared from the written language for a while. It returned in the early 1600s to provide the root for the woodsy adjective bosky. By the early 1800s, bosk (also spelled bosque) had reappeared in writing, but this time with the meaning "a small wooded area."

bosthoon

A bosthoon is a boor or a dolt or, in modern English, a stupid ass.

bothy

A bothy is a hut or small cottage, especially a rude hut for unmarried farm servants or a shelter for shepherds and hunters. These days, it means a basic shelter in remote areas, usually free to use and often with a fireplace and water source.

break (of day)

Break of day means dawn, or the first light of day. A time when your authors are moaning about "crack of dawn" and reaching for the coffee pot.

briar

A briar (or brier) is a plant such as a rose, blackberry, or greenbrier that has a usually woody and thorny or prickly stem. It can also refer to a branch, twig, or stem of such a plant, or to a thicket of them. A wooden pipe for smoking tobacco is made from the root of the briar. Briar pipes have been prized by many over the centuries for both their lightness and the "cool" smoke they give.

broadcloth

Broadcloth is a densely textured, traditionally woolen cloth with a plain or twill weave and a lustrous finish. But the material may also be silk, cotton, or synthetic fabric with a narrow crosswise rib.

The defining characteristic of broadcloth is not its finished width but the fact that it was woven much wider (typically 50 to 75% wider than its desired finished width) and then heavily milled (traditionally the cloth was worked by heavy wooden trip hammers in hot soapy water) in order to shrink it to the required width. The effect of the milling process is to draw the yarns much closer together than could be achieved in the loom. This allows the individual fibers of the wool to bind together in a felting process, which results in a dense cloth with a stiff drape which is highly weather-resistant, hard wearing, and capable of taking a cut edge without the need for being hemmed.

The manufacturing process originates from Flanders. This type of cloth was also made in Leiden and several parts of England at the end of the medieval period.

Since the early 1920s, the American market has used the term "broadcloth" to describe a plain-woven, usually mercerized fabric woven with a rib and a slightly heavier filling yarn. It's used for shirt-making, from cotton or a polyester-and-cotton blend.

broch

A broch is an Iron Age drystone circular tower, usually consisting of double walls enclosing small rooms around a central court. These are found in Scotland, where the word may also mean a luminous ring around the moon popularly regarded as an omen of bad weather, but here we're concerned with the towers.

The word broch is derived from the Lowland Scots 'brough,' meaning fort. Brochs are often referred to as dùns in the west, and they are the most spectacular of a complex class of buildings found in northern Scotland. There are approximately 571 broch sites throughout the country.

The origin of brochs is subject to ongoing research. There is little doubt that the hollow-walled broch tower was invented by the people who once lived in what is now Scotland. The first brochs may have been built circa 300 BCE.

Brochs are notable for their sheer size — some still stand between 32 and 42 feet to the wall head (the top of the broch). On top of this wall, it is thought there would have been a large conical thatched roof, meaning that brochs may have stood over 52 feet high when fully constructed, ensuring that they were an imposing presence on the surrounding landscape. But it’s not just the grand height of these structures which makes brochs so compelling.

The design of brochs demonstrates an unparalleled degree of sophistication and an understanding of materials and their limitations. To be able to construct buildings in drystone (that is, without mortar or other bonding agents) to such lofty heights without them collapsing required a number of ingenious features. The walls of the broch were built extremely thick — about 16 feet thick at the base — but, as the building rises, the walls become thinner, tapering inwards in a technique known as 'batter.' This prevents the walls from toppling or bulging under the weight, thus creating a more robust structure, as well as reducing the weight of the upper levels of the structure. The builders also reduced the weight of the walls by creating a gap within the thick walls, essentially building two walls joined together by lintels to form two separate 'skins' with a hollow between them. The name for this gap is an intramural gallery.

The reason for building to such heights was to accommodate multiple floors within the building. Some brochs even had two suspended floors above the entrance level. Curiously, rather than access the first suspended floor via a stone staircase or wooden ladder in the inner space, the broch builders created a tapering helical staircase inside the wall, always ascending in a clockwise direction. Another intriguing aspect of broch architecture are the 'cells.' These are small, beehive shaped rooms with corbelled stone ceilings, which can be accessed through low narrow doorways.

Another curious feature of broch design is the entrance. Having no windows, the single entrance was the only means of access to the building. A long narrow passage with a low ceiling penetrates the thick walls, forcing anyone who entered to stoop down. About half-way down the entrance passage was a stout door secured by logs which would brace the door from the inside. Behind this door, and built within the walls, was a small cell, which is typically called the 'guard cell,' though its use is unclear.

How these magnificent structures were used by those who constructed them has been the focus of much debate for almost two centuries. At first, they were thought to have been defensive fortifications due to their thick walls and castle-like features. Brochs' close groupings and profusion in many areas support that theory. Some of them were sited beside precipitous cliffs and were protected by large ramparts, artificial or natural. Often, they are at key strategic points.

More recently, however, it is thought that they were the dwellings of farming communities. About 20 broch sites include small settlements of stone buildings surrounding the main tower. Brochs were sometimes located close to arable land and a source of water (some have wells or natural springs rising within their central space). But some were not so located.

Most brochs are unexcavated. The end of the broch building period seems to have come around AD 100–200. Those that have been properly examined show that they continued to be in use for many centuries, with the interiors often modified and changed, and that they underwent many phases of habitation and abandonment.

Brochs may also have been the center of social, cultural and communal life. We simply do not know yet.

brute

A brute is an animal other than a human. The word is also used to describe a brutal, crude, or insensitive person, such as a rough and violent man.

by hook or by crook

By hook or by crook means "by any method necessary," suggesting that you should do whatever you have to, whether or not it's ethical and legal, to accomplish a goal.

There are several theories for the origin of the phrase. But the strong favorite is that it derives from the ancient English custom of allowing peasants to gather from royal forests any deadwood they could pull down with a shepherd's crook or cut with a reaper's billhook. William Cobbett recorded this feudal custom in the 1820s, although the custom itself is much older than that.

caldron

A caldron (or cauldron) is a large vessel, such as a kettle or vat, used for boiling water or cooking food. It is usually made of cast iron, often with a lid and handle. Today, the word is sometimes used figuratively, as in "a cauldron of repressed anger," suggesting that the emotion resembles the frantic activity of boiling water.

Cauldrons can be found from the Bronze Age (3300 - 1200 BCE), late in that period; these include huge ones with a volume of 16 to18 gallons.

A common association in Western culture is the cauldron's use in witchcraft to create potent spells from an assortment of weird ingredients. In Irish folklore, a cauldron is purported to be where leprechauns keep their gold and treasure.

carding

"A woman entered, having in her hand a pair of wool-carders, and bearing a horn on her forehead, as if growing there. She sat down by the fire in silence, and began to card the wool with violent haste."

To card wool means to comb, disentangle, and parallel such fibers as cotton and wool preparatory to spinning. The carder usually consists of wire teeth set closely in rows in a thick piece of leather fastened to a wooden back, similar to a dog brush. Hand carders are used two at a time to brush the wool between them until all the fibers more or less align in the same direction.

Carding of wool can either be done "in the grease" or not, depending on the type of machine and on the spinner's preference. "In the grease" means that the lanolin that naturally comes with the wool has not been washed out, leaving the wool with a slightly greasy feel. Carding can also be used to create blends of different fibers or different colors. The process of carding mixes up the different fibers, thus creating a homogeneous mix of the various types of fibers, at the same time as it orders them and gets rid of debris and tangles. Carded fibers are particularly good for spinning, needle felting, and wet felting.

cark

"I heard it from a birdeen that there was neither cark nor care, sickness nor sorrow, mishap nor misfortune on them till the hour of their death, and may the same be with me, and with us all!"

A cark is a worry, a trouble, or a burden. The word arose from Middle English "carken," meaning to be anxious.

carlin

"A little flattering carlin met him standing at the door."

A carlin is a woman, especially an old woman.

caterwauling

Caterwauling is the cry of cats in heat or fighting, or some similar harsh, disagreeable noise.

Though the most familiar sense of caterwaul, "to protest or complain loudly,"

is not specific to our feline friends, we think the word is wonderfully descriptive. Caterwaul first appeared in English in the 1300s. By the 1600s, caterwaul was also being used for similar non-cat noises and later as a noun referring to noisy people or things.

cats

We all know what cats are. They're those four-legged, soft, cuddly, purring creatures who warm our laps until we forget to feed them. Whereupon they may commence to caterwaul.

"The cats began to search for me through the wood."

The cats in the story *Conall Yellowclaw* are not real cats, but pretend cats, pookas perhaps, characters in the tale Conall tells the king in order to save the lives of his sons.

cave

A cave is a geological formation consisting of an underground chamber or series of chambers with access from the surface of the ground or from the sea. The name might also be applied to a storage cellar, especially for wine, or simply a place providing privacy.

People who regularly explore caves are called spelunkers or cavers and they often wear battery-powered headlamps to do their exploring. The Latin root word for cave is cavea, or "hollow."

champion

A champion is one that wins first place or first prize in a competition or is clearly superior in some way. The word may also refer to an ardent defender of a cause.

The original meaning of the word partakes of both these senses: in the feudal era, knights were expected to be champions and paragons of both prowess in combat and of causes, the latter most commonly being either patriotic, romantic, or religious. This reaches its most literal meaning in a trial by combat, in which each combatant champions the cause of one side of the trial. Today, a "King's Champion" is appointed for ceremonial purposes at the coronation of an English monarch, to defeat any challenger to the monarch's right to be crowned.

changeling

A changeling, a human-like creature found throughout much of European folklore, was a substitute left by a supernatural being when kidnapping a human being. Sometimes the changeling was a 'stock' (a piece of wood made magically to look like the kidnapped human), but more often a supernatural being made magically to look like the kidnapped human. Supernatural beings blamed for stealing children included fairies, demons, trolls, and many others. Usually, the kidnapped human was a baby or child, but there were cases where adults were taken.

A human child might be taken for any of several reasons: to become a servant, for the love of a human child, or simply malice. In rare cases, the very elderly of the fairy people would be put in the place of a human baby so that the old fairy could live in comfort, coddled by its human parents. Simple charms such as an inverted coat or open iron scissors left where the child slept were thought to ward off kidnappers; other measures included a constant watch over the child.

In Irish legend, a fairy child might appear sickly and not grow in size like a normal child, and might have notable physical characteristics such as a beard or long teeth. They might also display intelligence far beyond their apparent years and possess uncanny insight. A common way that a changeling could be discovered is through it displaying unusual behavior when believing it is alone, such as dancing or playing an instrument — though this last example is found only within Irish and Scottish legend.

Fairies would also take adult humans, especially the newly married and new mothers; young adults were taken to marry fairies instead, while new mothers were often taken to nurse fairy babies.

In Ireland, looking at a baby with envy endangered the baby, who was then in the fairies' power. So too was admiring or envying a woman or man dangerous, unless the admirer added a blessing; the able-bodied and beautiful were in particular danger.

cnamha

The cnamha, also known as Irish bones, is a percussive animal bone instrument that was popular in Irish tradition in ancient times and was used to provide rhythm in folk music.
These rhythm bones were usually curved and placed between the fingers, with

the convex sides facing each other. The goal was to move the wrist so that momentum would allow contact between the bones to produce sound.

compass

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although thou mayest think that it will not be easy," says Kilhuch toYspathaden Penkawr.

To "compass" can mean to go around something in a circular course. More commonly, it means to accomplish something, or to comprehend, to understand.

courser

A courser is one who courses or hunts, such as a dog or human, but the more common meaning is a swift or spirited horse, frequently used during the Middle Ages as a war horse. Coursers are commonly believed to be named for their running gait.

covert

"…hill and dale, bog and pasture, field and covert."

A covert is a secret or hidden place, covered or covered over, a sheltered place where animals can hide.

cradle

A cradle is a small, low bed for an infant, often furnished with rockers. The word is also used to describe the earliest period of life, or a place of origin, a birthplace.

The word can also be used as a verb. "He cradled the stolen chicken under his arm."

cronan

"…there was no sound to be heard but the cronawn of the insects."

A cronan (or cronawn) is a song or the sound of humming.

curse

Now, to curse usually means to speak a profane or obscene oath or word. In Medieval days, it might also mean to cast an evil spell, such as the one placed on Sleeping Beauty.

A curse (an imprecation, malediction, or execration) is any expressed wish that some form of misfortune will befall or attach to one or more persons, a place, or an object. In particular, "curse" may refer to such a wish made effective by a supernatural or spiritual power.

The study of the forms of curses comprises a significant proportion of the study of both folk religion and folklore. The deliberate attempt to levy curses is often part of the practice of magic.

daunted

"The tailor was not to be daunted, but took it in hand to gain the prize."

To be daunted is to be frightened or worried about your ability to achieve something.

deeshy daushy

"There was a deeshy daushy leather apron hanging before him."

We could find no definition for this phrase, but doesn't it sound to you like that apron is a fine, sturdy one?

demesne

The word demesne is a variant of "domain" and means real property. In Medieval days, it would usually be used for manorial land retained for the private use of a feudal lord or an extensive piece of landed property, an estate. It may also mean a district or a territory.

demon

"When the Law will come, it will do away with the Druid's magic spells that come from the lips of the false black demon."

Stories about demons, malevolent, supernatural agents of evil, occur in folklore, mythology, religion, and literature. Belief in demons probably goes back to the Paleolithic age, stemming from humanity's fear of the unknown, the strange, and the horrific. The original Ancient Greek word *daimōns* did not carry negative connotations, as it means simply a spirit or divine power. In Christianity, morally ambivalent *daimōn* were replaced by demons, forces of evil striving only for corruption.

Demons may or may not also be considered to be devils or minions of the Devil. In many traditions, demons are independent operators, with different demons causing different types of evil. Demons are still feared, largely due to their alleged power to possess living creatures. In contemporary Western esoteric traditions, demons may be used as metaphors for psychological processes ("inner demons").

devil

In Celtic Fairy Tales, the word "devil" appears 6 times, "divel" also 6 times, and "divil" twice. Other terms include "ould boy," "ould Nick," "ould thief," and "The Lad with the Goat-Skin."

In many religions and cultures, the devil is the personification of evil, ruler of Hell, and foe of God. It is given many different names, such as Satan, Mephistopheles Lucifer, and Beelzebub, and various attributes. It is portrayed as blue, black, or red, as having horns on its head, and without horns, and so on.
The word is also used to describe a wicked or malevolent person and sometimes a mischievous trickster. And when you devil someone, you annoy or bother them.

We like the name "The Lad with the Goat-Skin," who sounds like that altogether too independent small boy next door.

docking

"I'll search well as soon as the sun rises, whether there's any plant growing beside the house except thistles and dockings."

"Docking" has several meanings;
—placing a vessel in a dry-dock for painting, and repairs
—a cutting or clipping, as of a horse's tail or ears
—removing part of something

The word as used in the sentence above means cuttings.

doughty

Doughty means stouthearted, courageous, brave, able, strong, valiant, or bold. The word is traceable all the way back to Old English, so a knight might have referred to his sword as doughty and his fair lady might have called the knight doughty.

enchantment

Enchantment is something that gives a feeling of wonder or delight. It can also mean a magic spell, charm, or bewitchment, in traditional fairy tales or fantasy.

Sleeping Beauty was under an enchantment, which could also be called a spell, a hex, or a bewitchment. Enchantment spells affect the minds of others, influencing or controlling their behavior. Such spells can make a person see enemies as friends, or force creatures to act in a way they normally wouldn't. A wizard who specializes in enchantment is known as an enchanter or enchantress.

fifth

The origins of the provinces of Ireland can be traced to the medieval "fifths" or "over-kingdoms" of Ireland. There were theoretically five such over-kingdoms, thus "fifth" refers to one. However, during the medieval period there were always actually more.

The present four provinces of Ireland, Connacht, Leinster, Munster, and Ulster, no longer serve administrative or political purposes but function as historical and cultural entities.

flag

"Flag" often mean a rectangular piece of fabric of distinctive design that is the symbol of a nation, or a signaling device. Sometimes it means the tail of a deer. But, in the context of the stories, it means any of various plants with long ensiform leaves, such as the iris.

flail

A flail is an agricultural tool used for threshing, the process of separating grains from their husks. It consists of a long wooden handle and a shorter, free-swinging stick attached to its end. The handle is held and swung, causing the other (the swipple) to strike a pile of grain, loosening the husks. The precise dimensions and shapes of flails were determined to suit the particular grains being harvested.

An ancient military weapon was like the common flail, often having the striking part armed with rows of spikes.

flummery

"…for if he catches you, it's in flummery he'd have you in two minutes."

“Flummery” is another word for meaningless or deceptive language, humbug, insincere praise, or mumbo jumbo. It may also be any of several soft, sweet, bland foods, such as custard.

The "flummery" in the opening sentence doesn't seem to mean any of those things, for it's definitely a threat. We guess that perhaps the "pudding" is getting thick, and being thrown into it would be like landing in quicksand.

fool

A fool is a simpleton, one who is deficient in judgment, sense, or understanding.

In the Middle Ages, a fool was a clown or jester. These original fools were clowns hired by the king for entertainment and they were actually witty and smart. The verb "to fool" means to play a trick or hoax on someone, and "fooling around" is carelessly spending time on something silly.

giant

A giant is a person or thing of great size, or of extraordinary power, significance, and importance. In folklore, a giant is a being with human form but superhuman size, strength, and power.

The word giant is first seen in 1297 from Robert of Gloucester's chronicle. It is derived from the Gigantes of Greek mythology. Giants appear many times in folklore and myths. Representing the human body enlarged to the point of

being monstrous, giants evoke terror and remind humans of their body's frailty and mortality. They are often portrayed as monsters and antagonists, but there are exceptions.

Fairy tales such as *Jack the Giant Killer* have formed the modern perception of giants as dimwitted and violent ogres, sometimes said to eat humans. In more recent portrayals, like those of Jonathan Swift and Roald Dahl, some giants are both intelligent and friendly.

According to a 1965 examination in an American studies journal, "It is generally admitted today that Paul Bunyan was a synthetic figure conceived by advertising men rather than the spontaneous product of the folk mind, yet he has been adopted by the American people with enthusiasm. Paul and his blue ox Babe are supposed to have altered the appearance of the American continent; the animal's hoof prints became the lake beds of the Northwest and from its drinking trough spilled the Mississippi River."

gillie

A gillie (or ghillie) is an ancient Gaelic term for a professional fishing and hunting guide, or a man-servant. Historically, the term was used for a Highland chief's attendant. The BBC provided this history of the role in the late 1500s: "Highland chiefs needed attendants and manservants to do the toil, slog, and heavy lifting. They were responsible for knowing the weather conditions, for stalking, where the best fishing spots were." One of their duties was to carry chiefs across rivers so they would not get wet.

This position still exists in some Scottish Highland locations, where ghillies were, and still are, respected. They are no longer man-servants but "manage the wilderness and guide travelers through it." Some still wear the traditional ghillie outfit, a thick wool waistcoat, jacket and breeches. And, of course, grubby boots.

In Irish and Celtic folk tales, a character with the name Gilla or Gille appears in several tales. The name refers to a lad or youth of low social status, usually dressed in goatskins or in the hide of another animal. The name also appears as an Irish name.

gossoon

A gossoon is a young boy, a servant, or a lackey.

greedy

To be greedy means to have or want more than you need or can handle, such as money, or fame, or food and drink. It can also mean extremely eager or desirous to do some activity or follow some pursuit. If you're obsessed with something and can't get enough of it, you're greedy for it. This is a word for extreme, grasping, devouring behavior.

Hi! Ho!! Hogarach!!!

In the story, this is a triumphant exclamation by a giant. We could find no definition for it, but if you shout it loudly, we think it explains itself.

haunted

"For it was thought that the old ruined church was haunted, and that fearsome things were to be seen there at night."

To be haunted is to be inhabited by, or subjected to, the visits of such apparitions as ghosts. In daylight, it means to be obsessed by an idea, a threat, or something similar.

hearth

A hearth is the floor of a fireplace, usually extending into a room and paved with brick, flagstone, or cement. Before the industrial era, hearths were commonly set in the middle of the room, with the smoke rising to a hole in the roof. Later, when homes usually had a more solid roof, the hearth was placed to one side of the room and provided with a chimney.

The hearth was historically the main source of heat in the home, as well as where the cooking was done. As a result, family members often gathered together around the hearth. The importance of the hearth has made it symbolic of the home, as in the phrase "hearth and home."

heather

Heather is a low-growing Eurasian shrub in the heath family, growing in dense masses and having small evergreen leaves and clusters of small, bell-shaped pinkish-purple flowers.

henwife

A henwife is a woman in charge of domestic fowl. The suffix "wife" was used of any woman employed in a trade, such as fishwife, alewife, midwife, or housewife, the woman in charge of a household.

In the story *Fair, Brown, and Trembling* (the Irish version of Cinderella), the henwife is a witch and produces fine clothing for Trembling to wear.

Terri Windling, who writes extensively about folklore, says: "The Hen Wife, related to the witch, the seer, and the herbalist, but different from them too: a distinct and potent archetype of her own, an enchanted figure beneath a humble white apron. We find her dispensing wisdom and magic in the folk tales of the British Isles and far beyond (all the way to Russia and China): a woman who is part of the community, not separate from it like the classic 'witch in the woods,' a woman who is married, domesticated like her animal familiars, and yet conversant with women's mysteries, sexuality, and magic."

herb

Herbs are a widely distributed group of plants, excluding vegetables, with savory or aromatic properties that are used for flavoring and garnishing food, for medicinal purposes, or for fragrances. Herb generally means the leafy green or flowering parts of a plant (either fresh or dried), while spices are usually dried and produced from other parts of the plant, including seeds, bark, roots, and fruits. In medicinal or spiritual use, though, any parts of the plant might be considered "herbs."

In the wider sense, herbs may be herbaceous perennials but also trees, subshrubs, shrubs, annuals, lianas, ferns, mosses, algae, lichens, and fungi. Herbalism can utilize not just stems and leaves but also fruit, roots, bark and gums.

Botany and the study of herbs was, in its infancy, primarily a study of the pharmacological uses of plants. During the Middle Ages, when humoral theory guided medicine, it was posited that foodstuffs, possessing their own humoral qualities, could alter the humoral temperaments of people. Parsley and sage were often used together in medieval cookery, for example in chicken broth, which had developed a reputation as a therapeutic food by the 1300s. One of the most common sauces of the age, green sauce, was made with parsley and often sage as well. One recipe suggested it be served with a dish of cheese and whole egg yolks boiled in watered down wine with herbs and spices.

"What is a herb?" "The friend of physicians and the praise of cooks." (Alcuin and his student Charlemagne)

honey-bird or honey-finger

The henwife said, "I have a honey-bird here to sit on your right shoulder, and a honey-finger to put on your left." (*Fair, Brown, and Trembling*)

We could find no explanation for either term and have decided that honey-birds and honey-fingers are magical objects. This would agree with the way folk-tales in general refuse to observe the laws of physics and of the material world in general.

The henwife gave these magical presents to Trembling, together with the dress, so that she could go to church as instructed. The point of the honey-bird and honey-finger is that they identify Trembling's robes, and the inability of people to find a robe with those features means that they cannot find the girl who wore it.

jackeen

Here, Jack is combined with the Irish diminutive suffix "-een" meaning little, commonly found in Irish female names such as Maureen (Mairín, "little Mary"). Jackeen is a pejorative term for someone from Dublin, Ireland. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word as a "contemptuous designation for a self-assertive worthless fellow," citing the earliest documented use from the year 1840.

Jackeen is thus an Irish insult with an English origin. The noun Jack has been used to refer generally to a man, and especially an ill-mannered or obnoxious fellow, since at least the 1600s. The Irish paired the English jack with the Irish diminutive suffix -een, which literally translates to "little jack," just to add insult to injury.

Similar terms are:
—maneen: little man, a gauche young fellow
—traneen: a trifle; a blade of grass
—brancheen: little branch
—birdeen: little bird
—kippeen: a short thin stick

journey

A journey is a trip from one place to another, especially when involving a considerable distance. Or it may be a process likened to traveling, such as a series of trying experiences or an emotional passage.

The word comes from the Old French *journée*, meaning a "day's work or travel," and doubles as both noun and verb. The noun simply refers to a voyage; the verb is the act of taking that voyage. So you can journey across the Sahara, or through your mind. Either way, it's a good thing to remember that life is a journey, not a destination.

juggler

A juggler is someone who can toss and catch several objects at once, always keeping at least one of them in the air at any given moment. The word might also be applied to someone who uses tricks and deception, or performs acts of magic.

Professional jugglers can work for circuses or perform for money at festivals and street fairs. Juggler, jester, and wizard all once shared a meaning as well as a root, the Old English *geogelere*, "magician or conjurer."

knoll

A knoll is a small round hill or mound, often covered in grass.

Lady Day

"It was indeed Lady-day in harvest, that everybody knows to be one of the greatest holidays in the year…"

Lady Day was the first of four quarterly dates in the English calendar. On these quarterly dates, school terms would begin and servants would start work. More traditional schools still observe start dates on quarter days, such as Michaelmas term, beginning on 29 September. In order, the quarter days are Lady Day on 25 March, Midsummer Day on 24 June, Michaelmas Day on 29 September, and Christmas Day on 25 December.

The speaker above is referring to the fall quarter day, or Michaelmas Day, by that name. Today, we might use the term "equinox."

Laidly Beast

The Laidly Beast is a dragon with three heads. "Laidly" is a Scottish expression meaning "loathsome."

In Joseph Jacobs' book, the story about the dragon is based loosely on *The Laidly Worm of Spindleston Heugh*, also known as *The Laidly Worm of Bamborough*, a Northumbrian ballad about a princess who is changed into a dragon (the "laidly worm" of the title).

Jacobs' version has the beast with three heads living in a lake, and the doughty hero cuts them off one by one. The similarity seems to be mainly in the name of the Beast, and having a hero who risks all to bring the Princess back to her natural form.

laird

A laird is the owner of a landed estate, usually Scottish. In the traditional Scottish order of precedence, a laird ranked below a baron and above a gentleman. However, since "laird" is a courtesy title, it has no formal status in law.

leech

A leech is any of various chiefly aquatic carnivorous or bloodsucking annelid worms, of which one species (*Hirudo medicinalis*) was formerly widely used by physicians for therapeutic bloodletting, for at least 2,500 years. The word can also mean one that preys on or clings to another, a parasite.

And, for hundreds of years, "leech" has also been the nickname for a doctor.

leprechaun

In Irish folklore, a leprechaun is a mischievous elflike creature or fairy who, when captured, will grant three wishes or reveal the location of hidden treasure. They are usually depicted as little bearded men, wearing a coat and hat. They are tricksters, known for their love of pranks. While not malevolent, they are cunning and difficult to outsmart, especially when protecting their gold.

Leprechauns are well-known for their love of Irish music and traditional dance. They dance so much that they're always in need of new shoes and this is why they have become shoe-makers, the sole fairy to have a trade.

The leprechaun can be found only in Ireland, in remote, rural areas, often in underground caves or hollow trees. They prefer to remain hidden from humans and are said to lead solitary lives. It is said that the leprechauns have inhabited Ireland since before the arrival of the Celts and can live for hundreds of years.

An Irish website recommends *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, a 1959 American fantasy adventure film produced by Walt Disney Productions. The story follows Darby O'Gill, an old Irishman who encounters King Brian (played by Sean Connery), the 5,000 year old leader of the leprechauns. Darby tries to outwit the mischievous leprechaun to secure three wishes, leading to a series of humorous and magical adventures.

lissom

Lissom (or lithe) means limber, supple, flexible, and nimble, moving and bending with ease and grace.

Lissome (sometimes spelled lissom) is a gently altered form of its synonym, lithesome. The two words have similar pasts, tracing back to the 14th century and come from an Old English word meaning "gentle."

lough

A lough, or a loch in Scotland, is a lake, a bay, or an inlet of the sea. In Irish contexts, it often appears in the anglicized form "lough." A small loch is called a lochan.

Lochs which connect to the sea may be called "sea lochs" or "sea loughs." Some such bodies of water can also be called firths, fjords, estuaries, straits or bays.

marriage portion

A marriage portion is a dowry, either paid by the bride's family to the groom or his family, or by the groom's family to the bride or her family, at the time of marriage. In some cultures, the marriage portion is a traditional custom.

motty

Motty is an adjective, meaning full of or consisting of motes. In other words,

dusty.

musha

"Musha! then," says the king, "who are you?"

Musha is an Irish interjection, used especially to express surprise or annoyance. It was used in the pre-chorus of the song *Whiskey in the Jar*.

nigh

"Evening draws nigh."

Nigh means near, in time, place, or relationship.

nimble

If you're nimble, you can move quickly and with ease. That spryness can be both physical and mental, so even if your granny isn't very nimble on her feet, she can probably still whip you in chess.

The word nimble means quick, light, or agile in movement or action, and clever in devising or understanding. It's similar to lissome and lithe, only quicker.

omadhaun

Omadhaun means a foolish man or boy (from Irish Gaelic *amadán*).

"An omadhaun is a fool, Clohessy. You are an omadhaun." (Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes* 1996).

perch

"He ran with the mare for thirty perches."

As a noun, a perch can be:
—a spiny-finned freshwater fish
—a rod or branch serving as a roost for a bird
—a linear or square rod (British)
—a measure of volume for stone, about 24 cubic feet

—a frame on which cloth is laid for examination of quality

The meaning we're looking for here is "a linear rod." A rod is a unit of length equal to 5 1/2 yards.

piggin

A piggin is a small pail, can, or ladle with the handle on the side or, a lading-can. In the colonial era, some buckets were made like a small barrel, but with one stave left extra long. This stave would be carved into a handle so the bucket could be used as an oversized scoop for scattering grain, slopping the hogs, etc.

pitched battle

A pitched battle is a fiercely waged battle or struggle. It is one in which opposing forces each plan or anticipate the setting of the battle, and each chooses to commit to it. It is not a chance encounter.

During the Prehistorical period, pitched battles were established as the primary method for organized conflict and placed an emphasis on the use of rudimentary hand and missile weapons in loose formations. Pitched battles decreased in size and frequency during the Middle Ages and had ceased by the First World War because of technological developments establishing trench warfare. While there are a few examples of pitched battles that occurred on a large scale during the Second World War, during the Post-war period, pitched battles effectively ceased to exist because of the prevalence of irregular warfare.

poison

Poison is a substance that causes injury, illness, or death, especially by chemical means. The word can also mean something generally destructive or harmful, including mean people.

A toxin is a poison produced by an organism; it is especially used in medicine in reference to disease-causing bacterial secretions. Venom is especially used of the poisons secreted by certain animals, usually injected by bite or sting, such as the venom of a snake.

Poison refers to the harmful substance itself, or the act of giving it to someone. Poison often shows up in murder mysteries because it's a sneaky

way to get rid of someone. We also use poison metaphorically for things that tend to ruin something. A really obnoxious friend who always insists that he knows more than everyone else might poison the atmosphere at a dinner party. Jealousy can poison a good relationship.

raiment

Raiment is an old-fashioned word for clothing. The word derives from Middle English, where it was short for arrayment, from the verb *arrayen* ("to array").

Other fancy words for clothes are apparel and attire, as well as garments. Habiliments and vestments suggest clothes of a particular profession (as in "a clergyman's vestments"), while garb is effective for describing clothes of a particular style (as in "traditional Scottish garb"). If slang is more your game, try duds, rags, or threads. Raiment tends to appear mostly in classical contexts, though it pops up from time to time in contemporary English from authors looking to add a touch of formality.

rath

"There was the finest rath a little way off from the gable of the house, and he was often in the habit of seating himself on the fine grass bank that was running round it."

A rath is a hill or mound remaining from a kind of ancient fortification found in Ireland and called a ringfort. It's a usually circular earthwork serving as stronghold and residence of an ancient Irish chief.

The earthen ringforts are marked by a circular rampart (a bank and ditch) and they would have had (generally) at least one building inside, but often contained multiple dwellings and animal enclosures. In Ireland, there are over 40,000 sites currently identified as ringforts, and it's reckoned there would have been at least 50,000 on the island.

Nowadays, they're mostly respected by landowners and communities, and often referred to as 'fairy forts.' And you don't want to go messing with the Folk now, do ya?

retinue

A "retinue" is a group of advisers, assistants, retainers, or others accompanying a person of high position or rank.

reward

A reward is something you get for a job well done. Or, it might be money offered or given for some special service, such as the return of a lost article or the capture of a criminal.

You can use reward as a verb, as when the mayor rewards a firefighter who saves a family from a terrible blaze, or as a noun, to talk about the actual payment or item that's given to the firefighter. People often offer a reward for the return of lost or stolen things, like bicycles or jewelry or dogs. Reward meant "a regarding" or "an observation" in the 1300s, but it soon came to mean "repayment for some service."

rookawn

"It's there the pity was, and the trouble, and the crying, and the wonder, and the searching, and the rookawn, when that lady disappeared from their eyes, and without their seeing what did it."

The word was nowhere to be found, so we can only guess it means "carry-on" or "fuss."

roolya-boolya

It's there (in the rath) he heard the fulparnee, and the folpornee, the rap-lay-hoota, and the roolya-boolya, that they had there, and every man of them crying out as loud as he could: "My horse, and bridle, and saddle! My horse, and bridle, and saddle!"

Roolya-boolya means commotion, rowdiness, uproar, or hubbub. *Roolya Boolya* is also a musical duo which plays Celtic folk music with fiddle, guitars, and voices. They perform at festivals, concerts, and events in Australia.

The other three words were unfindable, but we get the general idea!

ruddy

To be ruddy means having a healthy reddish color, applied most often to a person's complexion, but also to such things as tomatoes or hair.

In Britain it is a substitute for words like bloody or darn: "The ruddy door is stuck again. I'm going to take an axe to it!"

second sight

To have the second sight is to possess ESP, an additional sense beyond the five normal ones. ESP means extrasensory perception or clairvoyance, the ability to see things that ordinary senses don't show. Second sight seems at first to be an odd name, since it means "the sight of events before they occur," rather than afterward. Some believe it comes from the idea that physical sight comes first, and second sight develops later.

The fairy world was believed to be visible to people blessed with second sight.

sheehogue

"Three days the feast was going on, and the third night she was to be married, and that was the night that Guleesh and the sheehogues came, hoping, if they could, to carry off with them the king's young daughter."

The Irish word for fairy is *sidheóg*, pronounced sheehogue and, obviously, sometimes spelled that way.

skiver

"Am I to be skivered like a rabbit before your eyes?"

There are several meanings for the word:
—inferior leather used for hat linings, pocketbooks, bookbinding, etc.
—a skewer or skiving knife
—one who uses a skive (or skives)
—to avoid work or duty, to shirk
—to skewer or impale
—an old form of dirk
—to scatter, disperse, as a flock of birds

slob

"He pitched in big stones and sods into the slob, till the ass got good ground under him."

A slob is a person regarded as slovenly, crude, or obnoxious. It can also mean mud, a marsh, or mire.

smallclothes

"The ass received him with a kick on the broadest part of his small clothes, and laid him comfortably on the dunghill."

Smallclothes are small articles of clothing (such as underclothing or handkerchiefs). It had never occurred to us that dunghills could be comfortable.

sned

"He accordingly pulled up the fir-tree, as I said before, and having snedded it into a walking-stick, set out on his travels to see his darling."

Sned is an archaic verb meaning to cut or trim the side shoots and buds from the length of a branch or shoot, usually of a tree or woody shrub, but can also be used to describe such pruning as removing the leafy top from root crops (particularly turnips).

soorawn

"…and going round so quickly and so lightly, that it put a soorawn in Guleesh's head to be looking at them."

We couldn't find the word but it probably means a dizzy spell.

soothsayer

A soothsayer is one who claims to be able to foretell events or predict the future, like a fortune teller or someone who has "second sight."

Soothsayer comes from the Old English word for "truth," combined with "say," together meaning "an act of speaking the truth." Today, it is also a moniker of the insect the mantis, whose name means "prophet" in Greek.

spell

Spell has a number of meanings:

—a short, indefinite period of time
—a period of weather of a particular kind
—one's turn at work
—to name or write in order the letters of a word
—a state of enchantment
—word or formula believed to have magic power
—a compelling attraction; charm or fascination
—to put (someone) under a spell; bewitch

A spell is a series of words that has magical powers. The word is often used figuratively to describe those times when you feel as if a magical power controls your action.

spinning wheel

A spinning wheel is an apparatus for making yarn or thread, consisting of a foot-driven or hand-driven wheel and a single spindle.

The basic spinning of yarn involves taking a clump of fibers and twisting it into a basic string shape. The spinner continues pulling and twisting the yarn in this manner to make it longer and longer while also controlling the thickness. Thousands of years ago, people began doing this onto a stick, called a spindle, which was a very lengthy process.

The actual wheel part of a spinning wheel does not take the place of the spindle; instead, it automates the twisting process, allowing one to "twist" the thread without having to constantly do so manually. Also, the size of the wheel lets one more finely control the amount of twist. The thread still ends up on a spindle, just as it did before the invention of the wheel.

The spinning wheel was fundamental to the cotton textile industry during the Medieval period. It laid the foundations for later machinery such as the spinning jenny and spinning frame, which displaced the spinning wheel during the Industrial Revolution.

steward

A steward is one who manages another's property, finances, or other affairs. For example, large estates, clubs, hotels, and resorts hire stewards. A ship's officer in charge of provisions and dining arrangements is called a steward.

stonechatter

A stonechatter is a small, active, and very common European singing bird, also called chickstone, stonechacker, stonechatter, stoneclink, or stonesmith.

tarn

A tarn is a small mountain lake or pool in a hollow area surrounded by steep slopes scooped out by a glacier. Such glacier-formed pools are found all over the world, from New York's Adirondack Mountains to the Tatras Mountains in Slovakia. The word tarn comes from the Old Norse *tjörn*, "small mountain lake with no tributaries."

tawny

The word tawny refers to a warm, sandy color, like that of a lion. It can also refer to a type of port wine or a breed of owl.

Tawny comes from the Anglo-Norman word, *taune*, which means tanned. Tan first meant the bark of an oak tree, used to cure leather. It's from the look of tanned leather that we get the word tawny.

thimble

A thimble is a small pitted cup worn on the finger to protect it from being pricked or poked by a needle while sewing. Although there are isolated examples of thimbles made of precious metals, the vast majority of Medieval metal thimbles were made of brass.

As the purpose of a thimble is to prevent discomfort while sewing by providing a barrier between fingertips and the blunt end of a needle, it is likely that the earliest thimbles were created closely following the invention of sewing. Thimbles dating to the 10th century have been found in England, and thimbles were in widespread use there by the 14th century, but they would have been in use long before that.

thistle

A thistle is any of numerous often weedy plants having prickly leaves and floral bracts, such as the Russian thistle. Tough and usually found in arid and dry regions, the thistle can grow up to 8 feet high and has extensive root systems that can endanger surrounding plants. The flower blooms in a range

of colors, such as white and yellow, but it is most commonly seen in purple shades.

The thistle flower has a distinct prickly touch and grows spiny leaves that keep it from being eaten by wildlife. Considered one of nature's toughest flowers, it's one of the most debated plants by gardeners. Some call it a weed while others view it as an excellent source of medicine and food, as well as a beautiful ornamental plant.

Predominantly found in Europe, the thistle has been naturalized in other parts of the world, such as North America, where it is considered an invasive weed. Certain varieties are considered beneficial to wildlife because they produce a substantial amount of food for insects and birds and their foliage is also used by butterflies.

Known for its toughness and ability to thrive in harsh conditions, the thistle is Scotland's national symbol.

threshing

Threshing means winnowing grain, the separation of grains or seeds from the husks and straw.

In the earliest days of agriculture, it's likely the little grain that was raised was shelled by hand, but as the quantity increased the grain was probably beaten out with a stick, or the sheaf beaten upon the ground. The flail, a pair of connected sticks used to beat the grain, evolved from the early method of using a single stick.

An improvement on this, as the quantity further increased, was the practice of the ancient Egyptians of spreading out the loosened sheaves on a circular enclosure of hard ground, and driving oxen, sheep or other animals round and round over it so as to tread out the grain. This enclosure was placed on an elevated piece of ground so that when the straw was removed the wind blew away the chaff and left the grains.

Getting trampled by animal hooves, however, damaged part of the grain, and it was partially superseded by a variety of threshing sledges or rollers drawn over the spread sheaves. The first threshing machine was invented circa 1786 by the Scottish engineer Andrew Meikle.

A threshing bee was traditionally a bee in which local people gathered together to pitch in and get the season's threshing done. Such bees were sometimes festivals or events within larger harvest festivals.

toirm

"When I felt the rustling toirm of the cats after me I climbed into as high a tree as I saw in the place."

The word "toirm" means tumult, uproar, the tramp of feet, the thundering of waves. That doesn't sound like how cats move, but the cats in the story are fairies.

tremble

To tremble is to shake involuntarily, as from excitement or anger, without intending to, usually because you are frightened, ill, tired, or upset.

trews

Trews are close-fitting trousers, a traditional form of tartan trousers from Scottish Highland dress. Trews could be trimmed with leather, usually buckskin, especially on the inner leg to prevent wear from riding on a horse.

Trews appear to date to at least as early as Roman Britain. The triumphal arch of Volubilis completed in 217 CE once featured a bronze statue of Roman Emperor Caracalla; the only surviving fragment of the statue depicts a Caledonian Pictish prisoner wearing tartan trews. It was carved, then inlaid with bronze and silver alloys to give a variegated appearance.

Written records of trews date to 1538 CE, as a style of woven tartan-cloth trousers, probably used during the cold Highland winter when a kilt would be impractical. They were form-fitting garments, similar to the footed hose of the Renaissance, from which they probably evolved. The hose came all the way up to the waist and were attached to a linen cloth. It is said in Scottish traditional folklore that these were actually the common garment of the 16th to 18th centuries in the Highlands.

turnpumps

"The lord took Jack in hands, dressed him from top to toe in broadcloth, and frills as white as snow, and turnpumps, and put a watch in his fob."

Are turnpumps shoes?

Your guess is as good as ours!

ubbubboo

"But ubbubboo!" said he, suddenly, as he looked again at the young girl.

"Ubbubboo" seems to be an exclamation. Perhaps it means "hey, wait a minute!"

villain

A villain is a bad person — real or made up. In books, movies, current events, or history, the villain is the character who does mean, evil things on purpose.

Today a villain is a wicked person, whether in fact or fiction. In the 1300s, the word villain (or villein) described a low-born rustic. It came from the Medieval Latin word *villanus*, or farmhand. Just why a word would evolve from meaning farmer to evildoer, we do not know, although it probably has to do with farmers not being chivalrous, like the knights who were so admired in those days.

wile

A wile is a stratagem, trick, or ploy intended to deceive or ensnare, including a disarming or seductive manner. Its plural form is most commonly used.

Your charming friend might use his wiles to talk you into loaning him money again and again. Language experts can only guess about the origin of wile, though many believe it's related to the Old Norse *vél*, or "craft." Others think there may be a connection with the Old English word for wicca, meaning wizard.

witch

Witch is a term rooted in European folklore and superstition to mean a practitioner, especially a woman, of witchcraft, magic or sorcery. Today, she may be a Wiccan. In fairy tales, she may be an old woman considered to be ugly or frightening.

The modern visual image of the "folklore" witch is an old hag with a hooked nose and a mole, wearing a pointed hat and flowing robes, and flying on a broomstick. Many Russian fairy tales tell of Baba Yaga, an old witch who

flies around in a pestle and mortar and lives in a house that walks around on chicken legs.

Belief in the Devil was very strong in the medieval Church and witchcraft was regarded as heresy. Suspected witches were subjected to the Inquisition. While modern witches do believe in the ability to harness the forces of nature, Wicca has nothing to do with Satan, or evil spells. In literature, a 'witch' can now simply refer to an alluring woman capable of 'bewitching' others.

Song at Dawn

Song at Dawn (Book #1 in The Troubadours Quartet) is a historical thriller set in Narbonne in CE 1150, just after the Second Crusade. On the run from abuse, Estela wakes in a ditch with only her lute, her amazing voice, and a dagger hidden in her petticoats. Her talent finds a patron in Aliénor (Eleanor) of Aquitaine and more than a music tutor in the Queen's finest troubadour and Commander of the Guard, Dragonetz los Pros. Weary of war, Dragonetz uses Jewish money and Moorish expertise to build that most modern of inventions, a papermill, arousing the wrath of the Church. Their enemies gather, ready to light the political and religious powder-keg that is medieval Narbonne.

Full of historical detail and complex characters, this novel brings alive the political intrigue, culture, and harsh reality of court life in the twelfth century. Add to that the songs, lays, epics, and romances of the troubadours, richly described and deeply evocative.

About the Author:
Jean Gill is a Welsh writer and photographer living in the south of France with two scruffy dogs, a beehive named 'Endeavour,' a Nikon D750, and a man. For many years, she taught English in Wales. She is mother or stepmother to five children. Her publications are varied, including prize-winning poetry and novels, military history, translated books on dog training, and a cookery book on goat cheese.

Historical Note by the Author:
When actual historical figures appear in the narrative, I used historical fact whenever I could find it, and added detail which fits with historians' research. The 12th century left us little in writing so both facts and interpretation are widely disputed by historians, leaving room for a novelist to explore what might have happened.

Although Estela and Dragonetz are completely fictional characters, they live in the real world and events of the 12th century, which I have recreated to the best of my ability. All the lyrics in the book are from existing texts attributed to different troubadours but where the historical troubadours appear in the narrative, such as Marcabru, his lyrics are indeed his own.

In Occitania (now the south of France and north of Spain), it was a time when Muslims and Jews shared their amazing science, medicine, engineering, technology and even philosophy. Some Christians, like Dragonetz, recognized the future; others preached hellfire and damnation. Among the heathen

inventions which drew the wrath of the Church, threatening its coffers and its monopoly on the word, was paper.

Aubade, the Dawn Song

This is the first song sung by Estele de Matin (Morning Star), the main character.

A-bed beside his lady-love,
Her own true knight stopped kissing.
'My sweet, my own, what shall we do?
Day is nigh and night is over
We must be parted, my self missing
All the day away from you.'

If only day would never come
If only night could spare the pain
Of each new parting, little Death
That leaves enough to die again.

The Watchman calls the hour of Dawning
Bids me stand and face the day,
Exiles me to constant Morning
Grieving that I must away.

Know that whereso'er I wander
Never shall I find true rest
Without the circle of your kisses
And may you love your Night the best.

'My sweet, my own, what shall we do?
Day is nigh and night is over
We must be parted, my self missing
All the day away from you.'

A few notes on medieval music:
The two main characters in this novel are troubadours. Some of the most prominent secular music of the Medieval period was performed by troubadours and trouvères. Troubadours were traveling musicians who accompanied their own singing with string instruments like lutes, dulcimers, vielles, psalteries, and hurdy-gurdies. Trouvères were poet-musicians who

typically belonged to the nobility. Both were immensely popular with nobility and peasantry alike, composing intricate, poetic songs.

Typical subjects of troubadour and trouvère songs were war, chivalry and courtly love. Most of the more than two thousand surviving trouvère songs include music, and show a sophistication as great as that of the poetry it accompanies. The *chansons de geste* are Old French epic poems forming the core of the Charlemagne legends. More than 80 chansons, most of them thousands of lines long, have survived in manuscripts dating from the 12th to the 15th century. The masterpiece and probably the earliest of the *chansons de geste* is the 4,000-line *La Chanson de Roland*.

Other groups of medieval performers developed literary and musical genres based on vernacular texts. The jongleurs, a group of travelling entertainers in western Europe, sang, did tricks, juggled, and danced to earn their living. The minnesingers, a class of artist-knights, wrote and sang love songs tinged with religious fervor. The spielmanns were wandering entertainers, who performed at fairs, markets, and castles. They included singers, mimics, sword swallowers, and storytellers. Some of their carefree adventure tales, such as the 12th-century *König Rother*, are evidence of a highly developed underground literature, characterized by humor, amoral tone, and astute social observation. In England, gleemen performed for the lower classes.

Medieval music used many plucked string instruments like the lute, a fretted instrument with a pear-shaped hollow body which is the predecessor to the modern guitar. Other plucked stringed instruments included the mandora, gittern, citole and psaltery. Chaucer, in *The Canterbury Tales* (late 14th century), mentions the gittern being played by people who frequent taverns. The dulcimers, similar in structure to the psaltery and zither, were originally plucked, but musicians began to strike the dulcimer with hammers in the 14th century after the arrival of new technology that made metal strings possible.

Much of medieval secular music is unknown to us. Most people were illiterate; therefore, most music was not written down but learned by ear and passed on. The music that was written down was most often church music as it was largely clergy who could write. But in the first half of the 13th century, *Mirie it is* (Merry it is) was written down, a song complaining about the cold winter weather. This is closely followed by *Sumer is icumen in* (Summer has come in) from around 1250, another song about the weather, but on a happier note, rejoicing in the sights and sounds of summer: the ewe bleating and the buck farting.

During the earlier medieval period, liturgical music was monophonic chant; Gregorian chant became the dominant style. Music in the Roman Catholic liturgy was performed mainly for the mass. Originally, the music was

performed by the priest and congregation, until, in time, there emerged from the congregation a special group of singers, called the choir, who assumed the musical role of answering and contrasting the solo singing of the priest. Women participated in musical performances in the ancient Christian Church until 578, when the older Hebraic practices excluding them were restored. From that time until the 20th century, Roman Catholic Church choirs were composed solely of men and boys.

Medieval music sounds different to modern music because the instruments were different. Strings were made of gut (sheep's intestines) or wire (brass, iron, bronze, silver or gold), not steel or nylon as they are today. Some instruments, such as the flute and recorder, were made of wood. Many instruments, such as the simfony, citole and the gittern, have no modern equivalents. Even instruments which we still play versions of today — the harp and the recorder, for example, and the modern oboe, which is descended from the shawm — were made to different specifications resulting in a quite different tonal quality. Percussion was hugely important and would have included drums, bells, cymbals, and tambourines to bring rhythmic vitality to the songs of the troubadours.

Musical Terms:

acoustics — the science of sounds, teaching their nature, phenomena, and laws

alliteration — the repetition of usually initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables (such as wild and woolly, threatening throngs)

"Assatz es or' oimai q'eu cha" — It's high time for me to sing

aubade — a poem or song about lovers separating at dawn, or an open air concert in the morning, as distinguished from an evening serenade

baritone — a male voice or a musical instrument with a range higher than a bass and lower than a tenor

chord — three or more musical tones sounded simultaneously

compose — to create or produce a literary or musical piece

crescendo — a gradual increase in the volume or intensity of sound in a passage

discord — a confused or harsh sound or mingling of sounds

ensemble — a group of musicians, singers, or dancers who perform together

flute — Paleolithic flutes with hand-bored holes are the earliest known identifiable musical instruments, some dating to about 50,000 years ago. They were most commonly made of reed, bamboo, or wood, but could also be made of glass or bone. The oldest flutes were found in Europe, though they have also been found in Asia, the Americas, and in Labrador.

fourth — the interval between any tone and a tone four degrees distant from it

fret — one of several ridges set across the fingerboard of certain stringed instruments, such as guitars

guimbarde — the French or Occitan word for Jew's harp, which consists of a flexible metal or bamboo tongue or reed attached to a frame. Despite the colloquial name, the Jew's harp likely originated in Siberia, is of Turkic origin, and is believed to date back to at least 1800 BCE. It has no relation to the Jewish people.

lute — any plucked string instrument with a neck and a deep round back enclosing a hollow cavity, usually with a sound hole or opening in the body. It may be fretted or unfretted.

lyre — a musical instrument originating in ancient history, the earliest examples dating to c. 2700 BCE. According to ancient Greek mythology, the young god Hermes stole a herd of sacred cows from Apollo. Hermes slaughtered one of the cows and offered all but the entrails to the gods. From the entrails and a tortoise or turtle shell, he created the lyre. Apollo, figuring out it was Hermes who had his cows, confronted the young god. Apollo was furious, but after hearing the sound of the lyre, his anger faded. He offered to trade the herd of cattle for the lyre. Hence, the creation of the lyre is attributed to Hermes.

lyric — As an adjective, it describes poetry that expresses subjective thoughts and feelings, often in a songlike form. It can also mean exuberant or rhapsodic. As a noun, it refers to the words of a song.

mandora — a stringed instrument of the lute family

melody — a series of notes played in an order that is memorable and recognizable as a separate unit. Melody, harmony, and rhythm are the three main parameters that make music out of a collection of sounds and beats.

neck — the narrow part along which the strings of an instrument extend to the

pegs

oud — an Arabic and Turkish plucked string instrument resembling a lute

pegbox — the part of a violin or similar stringed instrument that holds the tuning pegs

phrase — a short passage or segment, often consisting of four measures

polyphony — two or more independent melodic parts sounded together

quatrain — a stanza or poem of four lines

rebab — one of the earliest known bowed instruments and the name of several related string instruments that independently spread via Islamic trading routes. The instrument is typically bowed, but sometimes plucked.

rebec — a bowed stringed instrument of the Medieval era and the early Renaissance. It was popular from the 13th to 16th centuries.

repertoire — the stock of songs, plays, operas, readings, or other pieces that a player or company is prepared to perform

rhyming — words having corresponding sounds, especially terminal sounds

rhythm — the patterning of musical sound, as by differences in the timing, duration, or stress of consecutive notes

stress — the emphasis placed on the sound or syllable spoken most forcefully in a word or in a phrase of words or music

tambourine — a musical instrument in the percussion family consisting of a frame, often of wood or plastic, with pairs of small metal jingles, called "zills."

trobairitz — female musicians and storytellers of the 12th and 13th centuries, the first known female composers of Western secular music

tuning — the calibration of a musical instrument to a standard pitch

PEOPLE and PLACES

Beatriz, Comtessa de Dia

The Comtessa was a trobairitz, a female troubadour, in the 12th century. Five of the Comtessa's works survive, including 4 cansos and 1 tenson. Her song *A chantar m'er de so qu'eu no volria* in the Occitan language is the only canso by a trobairitz to survive with its music intact. Beatrice's poems were often set to the music of a flute. She is the subject of a series of historical novels by the East German author Irmtraud Morgner. In the book, Beatriz says to Estela, "I sing too. And I compose songs. I shall be a trobairitz." And so she was.

Cathars

The Cathars (also known as Albigensians) were a dualist medieval religious sect of Southern France which flourished in the 12th century and challenged the authority of the Catholic Church. Cathar priests lived simply, had no possessions, imposed no taxes or penalties, and regarded men and women as equals. These aspects of the faith appealed to many who were at the time disillusioned with the Church.

Caves of Roquefort\

Roquefort is a sheep milk blue cheese from southern France. Though similar cheeses are produced elsewhere, EU law dictates that only those cheeses aged in the natural Combalou caves of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon may bear the name Roquefort, as it is a recognized geographical indication, and has a protected designation of origin.

Cercamon (world searcher)

Cercamon (1135-1145) was one of the earliest troubadours. His true name and other biographical data are unknown. He was apparently a Gascony-born jester who spent most of his career in the courts of William X of Aquitaine. He was the inventor of the planh (the Provençal dirge), of the tenso (a sort of rhymed debate in which two poets write one stanza each) and perhaps of the sirventes (form of lyric verse satirizing political figures, personal rivals, or social morals). Some of his contemporaries credit him as Marcabru's mentor, and some circumstantial evidence points to his dying on crusade as a follower of Louis VII of France.

Clairvaux Abbey

Clairvaux Abbey was a Cistercian monastery in France, founded in 1115. Cistercian monasteries were all arranged according to a set plan unless the

circumstances of the locality forbade it. A strong wall, furnished at intervals with watchtowers and other defenses, surrounded the abbey precincts. A moat, filled with water artificially diverted from tributaries which flowed through the precincts, completely or partially encircled the wall. This water also furnished the monastery with an abundant supply of water for irrigation, sanitation, and for the use of the offices and workshops. An additional wall, running from north to south, bisected the monastery into an "inner" and "outer" ward. The inner ward housed the monastic buildings, while the agricultural and other artisan endeavors were carried out in the outer ward. A single gatehouse afforded communication through the wall separating the outer from the inner ward.

Cubby Roo's Castle

Cubby Roo's Castle is the oldest medieval castle known to exist in Scotland. The ruins are located on the island of Wyre in Orkney. Built in the mid-12th century by a Norse landowner, the stone fortification originally consisted of a small, central tower set in an oval enclosure, surrounded by two ditches, a stone wall and an earthen rampart.

Knights Templar

The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, mainly known as the Knights Templar, was a French military order of the Catholic faith, and one of the wealthiest and most popular military orders in Western Christianity. They were founded c. 1119 to defend pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem, and existed for nearly two centuries during the Middle Ages.

Marcabru

Marcabru (born c. 1130–48) was a Gascon poet-musician and the earliest exponent of the *trobar clus*, an allusive and deliberately obscure poetic style in Provençal. Unlike most successful troubadours, Marcabru was not of the aristocracy and served in several courts in southern France and Spain without finding a permanent patron. His innovative technique and humor are evident in all his verse, and he was widely imitated and admired, despite his obscure imagery and difficult symbolism. More than 40 of his poems are extant, including Crusade songs, satires, romances, and a witty pastourelle.

Occitania

Occitania is the historical region in Southern Europe where the Occitan

language was historically spoken and where it is now sometimes used as a second language. This cultural area roughly encompasses much of the southern third of France as well as part of Spain, Monaco, and parts of Italy.

Omar Khayyam

Omar Khayyam (1048-1131) was a Persian polymath who contributed greatly to mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and poetry. His name is best known in English for a translation of his verse by Edward FitzGerald, an English poet, called *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Khayyam's contribution to music theory was in providing a systematic classification of musical scales, and discussing the mathematical relationship among notes, minor, major and tetrachords.

The quatrain by Omar Khayyam known as *The Moving Finger*, in the form of its translation by Fitzgerald, is one of the most popular in the Anglosphere.

> The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
> Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
> Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

Romani

Romani is an umbrella term used to describe a diverse ethnolinguistic group of people with a historical presence in Europe and West Asia. The common term 'Gypsy' is based on the myth that they came from Egypt. In reality, the ancestors of the Romani migrated out of India in the 1st millennium CE. In the present, Romani communities are found throughout the world. Romani people share language and certain cultural similarities but encompass a wide range of social, cultural, and ethnic diversity.

Herbal Medicine:
"Let your food be medicine and your medicine be food." (Hippocrates)

There are many references in this book to herbs in all their many uses. So let's take a quick look at herbal medicine in Medieval times.

Plants in their various forms can be effective medicine but some can cause harm when taken in excess or used inappropriately. For example, belladonna (*Atropa belladonna*) or deadly nightshade, is deadly. Belladonna means "beautiful woman," probably so named because women used eye drops made

from the berry's juice to dilate the pupil and produce a seductive and striking appearance. However, every part of the plant is poisonous if ingested, targeting the central nervous system. But, despite its toxicity in large quantities, it can be effective at regulating the heart rate and relaxing muscle spasms. It's used today to treat many conditions.

A whole host of plants were employed for medicinal purposes during the Dark and Middle Ages. Many herbs were drunk as healing or soothing teas and some were mixed with oil to make salves. For example, the mint family of flowering plants, such as lavender, pennyroyal, lemon balm, basil, thyme, and oregano, were used in teas, essential oils, and ointments to relieve indigestion, sleeplessness, headaches, and many other ailments.

Others named in the novel are listed below.

Herbal medicine dates back at least 5,000 years. In Mesopotamia, clay tablets have been found with lists of hundreds of medicinal plants. The Greek, Dioscorides, wrote his *Materia Medica* in 65 CE, a practical text dealing with the medicinal use of more than 600 plants.

In the Middle Ages, monks were responsible for cultivating and harvesting medicinal plants, as well as for creating remedies and providing medical care to the local community. They also maintained herb gardens and kept records. But herbal medicine was used not only in monasteries but also by lay healers and midwives, especially by women, who passed on their knowledge of herbal medicine to their daughters and granddaughters, creating a tradition of female healers.

Healing Herbs:
—**arnica**—a plant in the sunflower family. Made into a salve, it is used to treat muscle and joint pain, inflammation, and bruising.

—**comfrey**—once called "knitbone" because of its amazing ability to heal broken bones and "knit" them back together again. The botanical name, *Symphytum*, means "to unite." A comfrey compress is simply a cloth soaked in comfrey tea and then placed on the body. The skin absorbs the healing properties of the liquid and penetrates to the affected area. Warm compresses are relaxing, help with muscle tightness and bring more blood to the area. Cold compresses are constricting, slow down circulation and can help reduce bleeding and pain.

—**cumin**—a flowering plant in the family *Apiaceae*. Its seeds are used as a spice for its distinctive flavor and aroma. Cumin can be found in some cheeses and in some traditional breads from France. It is also used in traditional medicine for promoting digestion and reducing food-borne infections.

—**feverfew**—a herbaceous perennial that grows into a small bush, with pungently-scented leaves and lovely daisy-like flowers. Traditionally, infusions of the leaves were used to treat fevers and migraine headaches. Some people call it the "medieval aspirin."

—**garlic**—a species of flowering plant closely related to the onion, shallot, leek, and chive. For several thousand years, it's been both a food flavoring and a traditional medicine. It forms sulfur compounds, which experts believe can help boost the immune system and reduce blood pressure.

—**ginger**—a flowering plant whose root is widely used as a spice and a medicine to aid digestion, reduce nausea, and help fight the flu and common cold.

—**rosemary**—another member of the mint family. It has flat leaves shaped like pine needles that are deep green in color on top with a touch of silver on the underside. The widely used herb got its name from the Latin Rosmarinus officinalis, which translates to "dew of the sea." Its origins can be traced back to the Mediterranean region, where the ancient Greeks extolled the plant. It's used in cooking and, in herbal medicine, is used to enhance memory.

—**rose oil** (essence or attar)—is the essential oil extracted from the petals of various types of rose. Rose oils are still perhaps the most widely used essential oil in perfumery. People have cultivated and appreciated the rose as both a symbol of love and a gentle yet powerful medicine of the heart for centuries.

—**saffron**—a spice derived from the flower of *Crocus sativus*, commonly known as the "saffron crocus." The vivid crimson stigma and styles, called threads, are collected and dried for use mainly as a seasoning and coloring agent in food.

—**St. John's wort** (*Hypericum perforatum*)—The plant contains hypericin, the source of its antidepressive action. It also contains antiviral compounds and immune-boosting chemicals, known as flavonoids, that explain its action against viral, bacterial, and fungal infections.

—**valerian**—the dried roots of this herb are used in teas or tinctures as a tranquilizer, sedative, or antispasmodic. It may be used internally to treat painful menstruation, cramps, hypertension, and irritable bowel syndrome. Externally, it's used to treat eczema, ulcers, and minor injuries.

—**white poppy**—also known as the opium poppy, it's been used for many thousands of years. There is no better sedation and hypnotic drug and it is

very effective in treating pain. It is also used as an astringent and for chronic diarrhea and dysentery.

WORDS and PHRASES

Amazons

In Greek mythology, Amazons are portrayed in a number of ancient epic poems and legends, such as the *Labors of Heracles*, the *Argonautica*, and the *Iliad*. They were a group of female warriors and hunters who were known for their physical agility, strength, archery, riding skills, and the arts of combat. Their society was closed to men. They raised their daughters but returned their sons to their fathers, with whom they would only socialize briefly in order to reproduce.

Courageous and fiercely independent, the Amazons, commanded by their queen, regularly undertook extensive military expeditions into the far corners of the world, from Scythia to Thrace, Asia Minor and the Aegean Islands, reaching as far as Arabia and Egypt. Besides military raids, the Amazons are also associated with the foundation of temples and the establishment of numerous ancient cities.

arbalest

The arbalest is a variation of the crossbow, but more forceful, and came into use in Europe around the 12th century. A skilled arbalestier could loose two bolts per minute.

Barróg wrestling

Barróg was a style of folk wrestling practiced in Ireland until the early 20th century. In the Irish language, the word "barróg" simply means "hug" or "embrace." From there, it came to be used as the Irish name for backhold wrestling, in reference to the fact that both competitors were required to engage with each other in a chest-to-chest, hug-like clinch.

Wrestling, mankind's oldest and most basic form of recreational combat, traces its origins back to the dawn of civilization. Carvings and drawings estimated to be between 15,000 and 20,000 years old, found in caves in southern Europe, illustrate wrestlers in hold and leverage positions. Sumerians cast wrestlers in bold relief on stone slabs at least 5,000 years ago, antedating

all other artifacts of ancient sport.

bastinado

Bastinado means foot whipping, a method of inflicting pain and humiliation by administering a beating to the soles of a person's bare feet. Unlike most types of flogging, it is meant more to be painful than to cause actual injury to the victim. Blows are generally delivered with a light rod, knotted cord, or lash. The word derives from the Italian noun *bastonata* (stroke with the use of a stick).

bitch

A bitch can be any of the following:
—a female canine animal, especially a dog
—a woman considered to be mean, overbearing, or contemptible
—a prostitute considered in relation to a pimp

blazon

A blazon may be defined as any of these:
—to describe (a coat of arms) in proper terms
—to paint or depict (a coat of arms) with accurate detail
—to adorn or embellish with, or as if with, a coat of arms

bliaut

The bliaut (or bliaud) is an overgarment that was worn by both sexes from the eleventh to the thirteenth century in Western Europe, featuring voluminous skirts and horizontal puckering or pleating.

bolt

A bolt is a dartlike projectile used with crossbows by arbalests. Although their lengths vary, bolts are typically shorter and heavier than traditional arrows shot with longbows. The point, also called the head or the tip, is the pointed and weighted front end of the bolt, which is sharp and hard so that it can penetrate the target.

bow

To bow is to incline the body or head, or bend the knee, in greeting, consent, courtesy, acknowledgment, submission, or veneration.

brindled

To be brindled means having obscure dark streaks or flecks on a usually gray or tawny ground. Dogs are often described as brindled.

britches

Britches are trousers, especially those that do not cover the whole of the leg.

"Dragonetz, Aliénor's knight, had earned his title, 'Los Pros' (the Brave), as a Crusader, when so many had come home with titles like 'Brown Britches.'

burnet

Burnet is the name of a cloth dyed brown or an herbaceous plant of the rose family.

"...a woman whose body seemed about to explode from her coarse burnet gown at any moment."

cam

In machinery, a cam is a device for converting a regular rotary motion into an irregular, fast and slow, intermittent rotary, or reciprocating motion.

canter

A canter is a moderate and easy gallop adapted to pleasure riding. It is apparently short for 'Canterbury pace,' from the supposed pace of medieval pilgrims riding to Canterbury.

chamber pot

A chamber pot is a bedroom vessel used for urination and defecation. And maybe for spitting in, too.

cretin

A cretin is a person considered to be foolish or unintelligent.

"I'll have the stones off the next one of you cretins who fouls up"

Crusades

The Crusades were a series of religious wars initiated, supported, and sometimes directed by the Christian Latin Church in the medieval period. The best known of these military expeditions are those to the Holy Land in the period between 1095 and 1291 that had the objective of reconquering Jerusalem and its surrounding area from Muslim rule. Beginning with the First Crusade, which resulted in the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, dozens of military campaigns were organized, providing a focal point of European history for centuries. Crusading declined rapidly after the 15th century.

curtsy

A curtsy is a gesture of respect or reverence, made chiefly by women, by bending the knees with one foot forward and lowering the body.

cutpurse

One who cuts purses for the sake of stealing them or their contents (an act common when men wore purses fastened by a string to their girdles). A synonym is "pickpocket."

garderobe

A garderobe is a historic term for a room in a medieval castle, usually a store-room for valuables or clothing, but could be a private room or a privy.

Glima wrestling

Glima wrestling is an Icelandic combat sport and is categorized as Nordic folk wrestling. The most common form of glima involves a player gripping his opponent by the waist and attempting to throw him to the ground, using technique rather than force. Other variants allow for more aggression.

Wrestling has been practiced in Iceland ever since the country was settled, and there are early references to a form based on tricks performed with the legs and feet. The name "glíma" is first mentioned in the 12th century, and it is thought that the word means "the game of gladness."

gossip

The word gossip can mean any of the following:
—a person who habitually reveals personal or sensational facts about others
—rumor or report of an intimate nature
—a chatty talk
—the subject matter of gossip
And a gossiper, of course, is a person who gossips.

"Scurrilous gossip? That's exactly what I need, gossip. The more scurrilous the better."

goy

"Goy" is a Hebrew word meaning a person who is not Jewish.

gules

"Gules" means the heraldic color red, derived from the Middle English *goules*, which itself is an Old French word meaning "neckpiece made of red fur."

habit

"Habit" refers to external dress, particularly, the costume or dress regularly worn, or appropriate for a particular occasion, use, or vocation. "In her common habit, bedraggled and dirty, having slept overnight in a ditch with a big, white dog..."

ironic

If you say something is ironic, you're saying that it's characterized by incongruity between what is expected and what actually exists.

jarl

A jarl is a medieval Scandinavian chieftain or nobleman.

knattleikr

Knattleikr is the name of a Viking ball game. The rules of the game are vague. Knattleikr is mentioned several times in the Icelandic sagas, a collection of stories about Iceland written in the 13th and 14th centuries. "All the literary sources say is you can throw the ball and kick the ball and hold on to the ball, but somehow you've got to carry the ball over the line to score the point. And other than that, there are no rules." Iceland in the 10th century was fairly level in terms of social strata, with more upward mobility and less strict hierarchies than in the rest of Scandinavia. Entire settlements would gather for some good-natured brawling during knattleikr tournaments. There could easily be hundreds of people on the field at once, all running and tackling one another to the ground. Tournaments would go on for weeks, with temporary housing to accommodate players who faced off on the knattleikr field all day — and likely drank all night.

kraken

A kraken is a giant, tentacled, sea monster of Scandinavian myth, often represented as resembling an island, but sometimes looking like an immense octopus.

Lenten purple

"Lenten purple" is a rich, dark purple color. In Christianity, purple is associated with Christ as king, since in ancient times, purple was a color used by the nobility. In the Church, it's used to represent penitence and preparation.

Moor

"Moor" is a term first used by Christian Europeans to designate the Muslim populations of the Maghreb, al-Andalus (Iberian Peninsula), Sicily, and Malta during the Middle Ages. Moors are not a single, distinct, or self-defined people. Europeans of the Middle Ages and the early modern period variously applied the name to Arabs, Berbers, and Muslim Europeans.

oltra mar

"Oltra mar" means "across the sea" in the ancient French language.

olive oil soap

Olive oil has been used for cosmetic purposes since ancient times. In fact, olive oil was likely one of the first soaps made without animal fat or oil. Castile soap, as it's originally called, may have originated in the territories of the crown of Castile in Spain.

palanquin

A palanquin is a conveyance formerly used especially in Asia. It's usually for one person and consists of an enclosed litter borne on the shoulders of men by means of poles.

papermaking

During the 8th century CE, Chinese papermaking spread to the Islamic world, where pulp mills and paper mills were used for papermaking and money making. By the 11th century, papermaking was brought to Europe. The first recorded paper mill on the Iberian Peninsula was in Xàtiva, with papermaking spreading north to Nuremberg, Germany, by 1390. It was common enough by the 13th century for a decree from Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II in 1221 to declare all official documents written on paper to be invalid!

The application of stamping hammers was developed to reduce hemp and white linen rags to pulp for making paper, sizing it by means of animal glue, and creating watermarks in the paper during its forming process. Waterwheels from the fuller's mills were adapted to drive a series of three wooden hammers per trough. The hammers were raised by their heads by cams fixed to a waterwheel's axle made from a large tree trunk.

After washing and soaking the rags for four or five days, the wet disintegrating pieces were cut into scraps and beaten for some hours in clean running water. They were left to fester for a week, beaten again, and so on, several times over, until the mixture disintegrated into a runny water-logged pulp. It was then tipped into a huge vat to drain. From there it was lifted and sandwiched between sheets of felt. Then the stack was squeezed in a press to remove excess water and the damp paper taken out and hung up to dry. When ready, the sheets were 'sized' by lowering them into an animal glue. The sizing made the paper less absorbent and allowed it to take ink without running. Sometimes, especially in north-east Italy (doubtless under the influence of

Islamic paper manufacture) the paper was polished with a smooth stone to give it a luxurious sheen.

pomp

"Pomp" is a dignified or magnificent display or a procession distinguished by ostentation and splendor, a pageant.

ponytail

A ponytail is a hairstyle in which some, most, or all of the hair on the head is pulled away from the face, gathered and secured at the back of the head with a hair tie, clip, or other similar accessory and allowed to hang freely from that point. It gets its name from its resemblance to the tail of a pony.

potboy

A potboy is a boy or a man who works in an inn or a public house serving customers and doing chores.

skald

A skald may be an ancient Scandinavian poet or bard who composed skaldic poetry, one of the two kinds of Old Norse poetry in alliterative verse, the other being Eddic poetry. Or the word may refer to the poem itself. Skaldic poems were traditionally composed to honor kings, but were sometimes extempore. These poems are based upon an exceptionally complex metric structure, and often involve a unique version of metaphors known as the kenning. "Jarl Rognvaldr (Prince of Orkney) wishes to honor Lady Ermengarda with a skald, a poem in the style of my people."

scutage

Scutage was a medieval English tax levied on holders of a knight's fee under the feudal land tenure of knight-service. Under feudalism the king, through his vassals, provided land to knights for their support. The knights owed the king military service in return. The knights were allowed to "buy out" of the military service by paying scutage.

sot

A sot is a habitual drunkard.

squint (peep-hole)

In architecture, a "squint" is an oblique opening through the walls of some old churches, usually meant to enable a person in the transepts or aisles to see the elevation of the host at the high altar. Squints were also built into internal castle walls for the use of suspicious lords.

sugar

Sugarcane is native to tropical areas such as the Indian subcontinent and is referred to in Chinese manuscripts as early as the 8th century BCE. Sugar remained relatively unimportant until the Indians discovered methods of turning sugarcane juice into granulated crystals that were easier to store and to transport. Crusaders brought sugar back to Europe after their campaigns in the Holy Land, where they encountered caravans carrying "sweet salt." It supplemented the use of honey, which had previously been the only available sweetener. Crusade chronicler William of Tyre, writing in the late 12th century, described sugar as "very necessary for the use and health of mankind." In the 15th century, Venice became the chief sugar refining and distribution center in Europe.

sweetmeat

A sweetmeat is a sweet thing to eat. The key is that "meat" used to just mean "food." This older sense of the word still sticks around here and there, as in the practice of referring to the edible part of a nut as the "meat."

tambour

In classical architecture, a tambour is the inverted bell of the Corinthian capital around which are carved acanthus leaves for decoration. The term also applies to the wall of a circular structure and to the drum-shaped segments of a column, which is built up in several courses. It may refer to an embroidery frame, especially a set of two interlocking hoops between which cloth is stretched before stitching. Finally, a tambour may be a rolling top or front (as of a rolltop desk) of narrow strips of wood glued on canvas.

topaz

Topaz is a mineral made of aluminum and fluorine which is used as a gemstone in jewelry and other adornments. Common topaz in its natural state is colorless, though trace element impurities can make it pale blue or golden brown to yellow-orange. Topaz is often treated with heat to make it a deep blue, reddish-orange, pale green, pink, or purple. In the Middle Ages, the name topaz was used to refer to any yellow gemstone.

torneig

A torneig is a tournament (competition involving several rounds or stages), a tourney, or a tournament (competition between knights).

vanguard

A vanguard is the person or persons at the forefront of any group or movement.

vitriol

Vitriol describes bitterly abusive feeling or expression.

FOOD for THOUGHT
(quotes from the book)

"A man can die of boredom."

Regarding singers, "Sometimes you clap because they 'have' finished, thank God, and sometimes, you clap to make them."

"She doesn't lack guts … but she has the subtlety of a boot up the arse."

"He treads a measure with the grace of an ague-ridden pig."

A few words on medieval libraries:

The heroine of the novel, Estela, has the following conversation with her tutor.

"Books?" asked Estela.

"You have heard of the Great Library of Cordoba?"

"I know what a library is," Estela was quick to reply. "Why, there is a library in Avignon with two thousand books." She waited for him to be impressed and was pleased with his long pause.

Finally, "My Lady," he said, "The Great Library at Cordoba had four hundred thousand books."

It was her turn to be silent. "I can't imagine such a big number," she said. "Have you seen all those books?"

"Cordoba itself was destroyed but other libraries remain — Toledo, Seville."

"I would love to see so many books! I can read," declared Estela, knowing full well that this was a rare skill, rarer still among women.

"In Arabic, my Lady?" was the gentle query in response. "To read the ancients, on medicine, on astronomy, on music, Arabic is necessary."

Most people have heard of the famous library in Alexandria, in the days of Alexander the Great. But it was only one of the libraries that existed in those times, since the ancients knew that knowledge is power. This led them to preserve human wisdom in massive libraries which each held thousands of texts. These libraries became beacons of learning that nurtured intellectual growth and ignited the flames of discovery. Sadly, just about all of them were eventually destroyed and lost to history.

The first libraries appeared five thousand years ago in the Fertile Crescent, an area ranging from Mesopotamia to the Nile in Africa. It was here that the art of writing developed, sometime before 3000 BCE and the first archives consisted mainly of the records of commercial transactions or inventories.

The earliest form of writing was cuneiform script on clay tablets. About an inch thick, tablets came in various shapes and sizes. Mud-like clay was placed in wooden frames, and the surface was smoothed for writing and allowed to dry until damp. After being inscribed, the clay was dried in the sun or, for a harder finish, baked in a kiln. For storage, tablets could be stacked on edge, side by side, the contents described by a title written on the edge that faced out and was readily seen. The tablets were stored in containers such as wooden boxes, woven baskets of reeds, or clay shelves.

One of the oldest libraries, that of Ashurbanipal, was founded in Nineveh, Assyria in the 7th century BCE. Over 30,000 clay tablets have been discovered, providing modern scholars with a wealth of Mesopotamian literary, religious, and administrative works. Among the findings were the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and "omen texts" which contained omens dealing with the moon, its visibility, eclipses, and conjunction with planets and fixed stars, the sun, its corona, spots, and eclipses, the weather, and the planets and their visibility, appearance, and stations. There were also astrological texts, as well as standard lists used by scribes and scholars such as words, bilingual vocabularies, signs and synonyms, and lists of medical diagnoses.

The Library of Alexandria, in Egypt, was the largest and most significant great library of the ancient world. It functioned as a major center of scholarship from the 3rd century BCE until the Roman conquest of Egypt in 30 BCE. It had lecture halls, observatories, museums, and even a zoo. It's said that the library books, largely on papyrus, held the entire body of Greek literature including pieces by Plato, Aristotle, and Homer.

An indication of how important libraries were considered by rulers is this description of a library in Shiraz in the 8th century:

"...a complex of buildings surrounded by gardens with lakes and waterways. The buildings were topped with domes, and comprised an upper and a lower story with a total, according to the chief official, of 360 rooms....In each department, catalogues were placed on a shelf... the rooms were furnished with carpets..."

In Europe in the Middle Ages, monastery libraries developed, such as the important one at the Abbey of Montecassino in Italy. Books were usually chained to the shelves, reflecting the fact that manuscripts were valuable possessions. After finishing copying, a scribe often added a curse to the final page that warned of eternal damnation or prolonged physical suffering if the book were stolen.

Book production was relegated almost exclusively to the larger monasteries, where both monks and lay brothers were copyists and bookbinders. Artists were employed to illuminate pages with elaborate designs, capital letters, and pictures. A substantial monastery might have up to 40 scribes at work in the scriptoria; the average scribe would scribble away for hours a day, interrupted only by meals and prayers, and copy two books a year.

Perhaps the most remarkable example of a medieval library is in the monastery of Saint Gall, near Lake Constance in Switzerland. The library has remained in continuous use since the Middle Ages, and the collection, though now housed in a Baroque building, retains many of the works created at and for the monastery since the eighth century CE.

As long-time readers, all we can say is long live libraries, anywhere and everywhere!

Celtic Mythology Collections Book I

Celtic Mythology Collections Book I (edited by Brian O'Sullivan) is part story, part folklore, and part history. The authors of the five modern stories relate tales of ancient Celts and remain true to the original flavors. Each story is accompanied by a description of how the story came to be, how it was passed down through generations and cultures, and how important the origins are to the story.

This collection by a new wave of contemporary authors hauls Celtic stories out of the dusty shadows and with succinct mythological analysis places them back into the light where they belong. These fascinating tales of love, mystery, and drama mark a new movement of authentic and original Celtic-based writing and a better understanding of Celtic cultures.

About the editor:
Brian O'Sullivan was born in county Cork, Ireland. On completing a degree at University College Cork, he went on to travel extensively. He is now based in New Zealand, where he runs Irish Imbas Books with his partner and family but returns to Ireland frequently. He writes regular articles on Irish history and art, ancient belief systems, aspects of Irish culture, and on his own writing at his blog on the Irish Imbas Books website or the Irish Imbas Substack.

Brian writes fiction that incorporates strong elements of Irish culture, language, history and mythology. Based on the ancient Irish mythology and Fenian Cycle texts, the *Fionn mac Cumhaill Series* is a gritty and authentic retelling of the birth and early adventures of Ireland's greatest hero, Fionn mac Cumhaill. Gripping, insightful, and action-packed, this is Irish mythology fiction as you've never read it before.

Although he writes predominantly for an Irish audience, Brian's unique style and humor has meant that his books have become firm favorites of readers all around the world.

INTRODUCTION by the Editor

What we refer to as 'mythology' today was actually a framework of ideas and beliefs used by our ancestors to understand the world around them. In the absence of modern-day science and technology, these people used an approach based predominantly on observation and deduction over an extended period to make sense of the things they saw in their lives and environment but

could not explain. Instead of developing theories or hypotheses to articulate those explanations as we would do today, they developed narratives or stories that used those observations and deductions. This is why so much mythology is connected to questions of creation such as 'Where did we come from?' and 'Where did the moon and stars come from?' or explanations for uncommon natural phenomena such as giant waves, earthquakes, rainbows, mists and so on. These stories, and others that helped to guide how people should treat each other, formed the basis of the Celts' cultural belief system.

Since the erosion of what are generally referred to as the Celtic nations, those cultural beliefs have often been seen as something to be looked down on and many of the important cultural narratives have been classified as fantasies or relegated to the status of children's tales.

As a result, despite the affection that people of Celtic heritage feel for such stories, very few actually understand them today. That lack of knowledge — the result of a great disconnect from one's cultural heritage — means that, in contemporary times, we've come to believe in skin-deep, almost cartoon-like caricatures of our own cultural origins.

Given the amount of time that's passed, it's hard to fully comprehend how much has been lost, even if it's easy to understand how it has been lost. Over the course of history, the Celtic nations were invaded and colonized by Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Norman and English nations.

The impacts of war and domination by a foreign culture caused huge destruction of Celtic society and completely eroded the social mechanisms normally used to transfer cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. Thus, the druids, the poets, the Gaelic-based educational system, and the Celtic languages have fallen from favor. The scorn for Celtic culture displayed by administrative and governance systems established by the colonizing cultures, combined with the increasing influence of the Christian church — an entity with a strong interest in suppressing native (and competing) belief systems — meant that the Celtic belief systems never stood a chance.

Over time, the people of the Celtic countries began to lose their stories and their language and consequently, their connection to their own history and culture. By the late 18th century, a significant proportion of cultural knowledge had already been lost. Other elements, meanwhile, were being misinterpreted and romanticized by amateur "folklorists," generally privileged writers descended from the ruling classes who had limited interaction with the native populations whose culture they were mining. No one seemed to notice the irony that their exclusion from the established educational system meant few of the native population had the skills or opportunity to conserve their

own cultural knowledge by transferring it into written form.

Fortunately, some scraps of the ancient Celtic belief systems managed to survive through the work of passionate historians and scholars who recorded and saved what knowledge they could, often at great risk to their own lives. A certain, limited, transfer of cultural narratives also continued through the ragged remnants of the last remaining poets and bards before they too died out. As a result of the efforts of these early scholars and the dedicated analysis of the information they managed to save, talented academics have managed to piece together much of that ancient knowledge over the last hundred and fifty years or so. Unfortunately, little of that work has seeped beyond the realms of academia and back out to a wider audience. In the age of the internet, where anyone can publish unsubstantiated opinions and *Irish Imbas* articles that receive no peer review, cultural misinterpretation and misinformation on Celtic cultures continues to flourish.

This collection of stories by contemporary authors is a first attempt to haul Celtic stories and beliefs back out of the shadows. Love stories, action, or mystery, these fascinating tales and their associated contextual contexts mark what we would like to believe is a new wave of more authentic Celtic writing. It is, we hope, a small but important first step in countering centuries of misinformation and allowing a better understanding of Celtic culture today.

Story: Hawthorne Close

About the author:
Sighle Meehan has won several poetry competitions and her poems have been published in various publications. Her full-length, bi-lingual play, Maum, was produced by Taibhdheare na Gaillimhe for the Galway International Arts Festival in 2015.

Mythological context: Fairies (by Brian O'Sullivan)

Ever since I was a kid in West Cork, I've been wary of 'fairies.' Down in Beara, we had an old neighbor called Thady who claimed to see strange lights up on the hill at night. On those nights, he told us, the fairies would come to torment him, causing strange noises up on his roof or knocking on his door after midnight. Thady lived quite far up the road from us, an isolated botharín (little road) that led down to the sea. It was a lonely spot and although there were at least four other houses on that road, all of them were empty and in various states of disrepair. Two were in ruins, two others had been deserted by families who'd died out or moved overseas. It truly was an isolated spot and that isolation did nothing to help him overcome his fear of 'fairies.'

Over toward Ballydehobb, I also knew an old woman who claimed her house had been built on an old Sidhe path — a kind of unmapped path where the fairies are said to travel. Not far from where she lived, there was an old blackthorn tree that she insisted was their favorite place to gather. There were also several old ráth up and down the coast — what people now often call 'fairy forts' — where mothers warned their children not to tread. In fact a rath is just the ruin of an ancient farming settlement and has nothing to do with 'fairies' but, removed from their cultural history over the centuries, people had to find some rationale to explain the existence of these substantial old structures. In that regard, the 'fairies' fit the bill perfectly.

As I grew older and became more informed, I learned some odd things about Irish 'fairies.' I was surprised to find, for example, that the word 'fairy' was actually an Anglicization of an old continental European word.

Despite what I'd been told at school, it wasn't a direct translation for 'Na Sidhe' or the 'Tuatha Dé Danann.' In fact, 'the fairies' bore no meaningful resemblance to those Otherworld figures referred to throughout the ancient Irish manuscripts.

The first thing you should know is that when you're referring to creatures of Celtic mythology, it's probably more correct to avoid the word fairy completely. The namby-pamby, flower-hoppers with wings that adorn the Enid Blyton books of old were never truly part of Celtic mythology. In particular, when talking about Irish or Scottish mythological creatures — essentially the same things — it's always better to use the Gaelic terms or sith (pronounced 'shee') or 'siog' or in plural form, 'Na Sidhe' or 'Na sioga.' [The Welsh too had specific terms that corresponded to the English word but as I have no expertise on this topic, I've not discussed them here.]

The word 'sí' is derived from an ancient Celtic word 'síd' which was the name for the giant mounds that held tumuli or passage graves where some of our far-distant ancestors were buried. This is why Na Sidhe — until the last century or two — were often portrayed as, or confused with, representations of the dead.

In pre-historic and pre-medieval Ireland, it seems certain that Na Sidhe were usually understood to be a kind of mirror image of humanity. In the oldest manuscripts, they are described as looking like us, speaking like us and, in general, acting like us, displaying all the character traits, both positive and negative, we'd associate with typical human behavior. The two key aspects that differentiated Na Sidhe from their human counterparts however, were that they (a) lived in the Otherworld and (b) had access to exclusive knowledge and powers.

In much of the surviving pre-medieval literature, when Na Sidhe interacted with humans they were generally portrayed doing so as equals, if not superiors. They were never, ever, 'little people.'

As the Celtic nations were invaded and conquered, their cultural belief systems were also eroded, which disrupted the transfer of traditional knowledge about Na Sidhe and Tuath Dé Danann. This transfer process was further disrupted by events such as the Great Famine in Ireland, the Clearances in Scotland and the exacerbated weakening of Celtic languages as native speakers died or emigrated in great numbers. Oppressed on all sides, over time Na Sidhe also took on an increasingly derivative form, shrinking (metaphorically and descriptively) in the stories they inhabited. Many of the stories with negative connotations associated with them also developed over this period as the Church asserted its position that belief in such entities was unacceptable competition at best, outright evil at worst.

Ironically, while knowledge of Celtic mythological figures was diminishing in the Celtic nations, reduced expressions of what they'd represented began to flourish in England under a new name: fairies. Distorted versions of the old Celtic mythological figures had been appearing in medieval romances, initially as Otherworldy enemies to the (mostly Christian) protagonists but, in later centuries, taking on a more alluring and less menacing role. In this new, sanitized form, the 'fairies' started turning up in literature such as Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and many others. Much later, during the Romantic Period (at its peak from around 1800 to 1850) when older cultural tropes were mined for inspiration purposes, the use of 'fairies' became even more popular.

The famous 1920 *Strand Magazine* article with the photos of the 'Cottingley Fairies' changed the visual portrayal of the earlier mythological creatures forever. From that point on, the word 'fairies' came to mean tiny, winged creatures who hid away in nature's quiet places but who also retained a tantalizing whiff of mystery and magic. Following that *Strand* article, the associated visual imagery became prettier and the 'fairy' figures drifted further and further from the mythological sources from which they'd been derived (aided in no small part by the famous 'flower fairies' pictures produced by Cicely Mary Barker and others). Over the latter part of the twentieth century, those became the images of 'fairies' that most people became familiar with. By then, of course, they were little more than a fantasy fabrication that had very little to do with Celtic mythology and had incorporated elements not only of 'Ye Olde English folklore' but of Germanic elves, classical Romano-Greek nymphs and satyrs, a mish-mash of Tolkien imagery and of course Disney's plastic, sugar-coated Tinkerbell.

Back in Ireland and Scotland meanwhile, detached from their original

interpretation, the Sidhe and Tuatha Dé Danann were gradually replaced by a diminutive new interpretation (the sioga) created from a merging of the remnants of the original beliefs, the dominant church teachings and the English-based 'fairy.' As the Gaelic languages were killed off, even the term sioga was increasingly replaced by the English term.

Over the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, these fairies came to represent an invisible source of mischief and malevolent purpose. In rural areas, they were held responsible for evil happenings and very much embodied the precarious balance of life in isolated agricultural communities. These particular fairies stole babies and replaced them with changelings. They tainted the milk and butter and required offerings to appease them. They wrought disaster on individuals who disturbed their infrastructure, their rath, their paths. and their thorn bushes. It was on the coat-tails of this interpretation of 'fairies' that I and many of my contemporaries grew up, although by then it had already been irreversibly diminished by the availability of electricity, education and the influences of television.

Hawthorne Close almost perfectly epitomizes the fairy folklore in Ireland and Scotland that most people above the age of thirty to forty will be familiar with. By focusing her story on the physical consequences of crossing the fairies rather than on the fairies themselves, Sighle Meehan gets straight to the heart of twentieth century 'Fairy' lore. These fairies represented the 'dangerous unseen,' the things we don't fully believe but don't fully disbelieve either. In her story, they remain silent and unseen, off to the side and out of sight. And they're all the more dangerous for that. Had they been described in full, as in the Ireland and Scotland of the fifties, sixties, and seventies when technology and science dragged 'fairy' lore into the light of day, their potency would have been extinguished.

[Additional Note: In more recent times, the interpretation of 'fairies' appears to have morphed once more, homogenized in the great 'melting pot' of international travel and communication where elements of different cultures are reduced to nonsensical meaning. Over the last two decades, 'fairies' have been increasingly restricted to the female gender and transformed to a kind of sexualized, elf-like form (complete with pointed ears, short skirts and a pout). This particular theory can be verified or disproved by merely entering the internet search term 'fairy image.'

Story: A Mainland Mansie Meur

About the author:
Sheelagh Russell Brown, descended from Irish immigrants on her father's side, is a lecturer in English literature at Saint Mary's University in Halifax,

NS. Her field of specialization is nineteenth- and twentieth-century British and European literature.

Mythological context: The Selkie (by Brian O'Sullivan)

Due to the close association between water and the spiritual world in ancient times, the Otherworld was often considered to be located underwater (usually in the sea but also accessible through lakes and rivers) and there are numerous old stories and folklore associated with this belief. It's no surprise therefore, that a number of narratives subsequently came into being involving creatures who lived underwater (the maighdean marra [mermaid] and fear mara [merman]) but who behaved and operated within the established constraints of 'Na Sidhe, that is, linked to the dead and potentially dangerous to humans.

These underwater creatures were very different to the more contemporary interpretation of what's commonly known as the mermaid: a creature with a human torso and a fish-like tail. The latter are based on elements from Assyrian tales, the Greek sirens and other, later, influential narratives such as Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*. Elements of these overseas stories did enter Ireland, Scotland, and Wales from medieval times and are thought to have had some influence on the portrayal of the original Celtic mythological creatures.

One of the most common stories involving the maighdean mara tells of a young man who spots a beautiful woman on the sea shore. When the woman puts her magic cloak aside, the man seizes it, thus taking her under his power. Accompanying him home, the maighdean mara becomes his wife and they have a number of children. One day, one of those children discovers the magic cloak (which had been hidden by the young man) and returns it to his mother. Taking the cloak, she flees back to the sea and enters it, never to be seen again. Variations of this legend are believed to have spread to Scotland and Iceland in the late Middle Ages.

Up in the Orkney islands and the Western Isles of Scotland, these stories appear to have developed into a more specialized lore around a seal people called Selkie (the word 'selkie' is thought to be an old Orcadian dialect for "grey seal") although those tales are also found in other parts of Scotland and Ireland. Much of the more common lore with respect to the selkie seems to have been sourced specifically from the works of a nineteenth century Orkney writer, Walter Traill Dennison, who wrote a number of tales based on beliefs and traditions from that area, many of them romanticized and possibly differing from the original lore through the transfer to prose. The most prominent theme to this selkie folklore relates to their shape changing ability: they are seals who can take on human form by removing their skin or pelt. If that skin is lost or taken, the selkie is restricted to human form until it is

recovered.

Sheelagh Russell Brown's use of the old tale *The Selkie that deud no' Forget*, originally published by Walter Traill Dennison in 1880, is a classic and effective use of a 'tale within a tale,' in this case providing a brilliant foil to grief-stricken parents to heartbreaking effect.

Story: In a Small Pond

About the author:
Marc McEntegart is a Dublin-based writer and editor whose work is largely focused on the games industry. His fondness for Celtic mythology comes from long summer drives in the passenger seat beside his grandfather.

Mythological Context: The Salmon of Knowledge (by Brian O'Sullivan)

Of all the Fenian Cycle tales, the story of *Fionn and the Salmon of Knowledge* has generally remained, if not the most preferred, then certainly the most well known.

Believed to date from the tenth century, the earliest remaining version of the tale is found in the twelfth century text *Macgnimartha Find* (the Boyhood Deeds of Fionn). A section of that text outlines how a seven-year old Fionn, named Demne in the text, goes to the Boyne to learn the skills of a poet from the poet and druid Finnegas and the subsequent events that occur there. Marc McEntegart's version of this ancient tale is unique in that he doesn't use the perspective of Fionn or Finnegas — normally, the two principal characters — to tell the story.

Instead, he focuses on the Salmon of Knowledge itself which gives those subsequent events an epic, almost timeless quality.

Tradition has it that the well of Seghais, the source of the River Boyne, was encircled by hazel trees that dropped their nuts (often used by our ancestors as a metaphor for wisdom) into the water. These floated downriver where they were eaten by a salmon that, by consuming the nuts, absorbed all the wisdom and knowledge of the hazel trees.

At heart, the Salmon of Knowledge story in the Fenian Cycle seems quite a simple one but in fact there are layers within it. The name of the poet and druid Finnegas (or Finnéices) for example, literally means 'Fionn the Seer' which is far too odd to be sheer coincidence and, possibly, refers to Fionn himself as an older and wiser man. The core theme of the story, meanwhile — a hero's acquisition of esoteric or forbidden knowledge through the

consumption of magical food — is one that's found among the mythology of many different cultures. Welsh mythology has a very similar version outlined in *Historia Taliesin* (The Tale of Taliesin) which describes how the early Brythonic poet Taliesin (Gwion Bach in the story) acquired the gift of knowledge by stealing three magic drops from Cerodwen's cauldron.

Similarly, in Norse mythology there's a version of the story where the legendary hero Sigurd, having killed a dragon, is asked by his comrade Regin to roast the dragon's heart. While Sigurd is carrying out this task, a sudden spurt of blood from the heart burns his thumb and, putting it into his mouth to cool it, he finds he's received the knowledge to understand the speech of birds. Afterwards, when he eats the dragon heart, he gains the gift of 'prophesy,' just as Fionn does.

If you look at one of the creation stories in the Book of Genesis, of course, you'll also find that similar pattern where Eve takes a bite out of the apple (or quince, according to some) from the forbidden tree of knowledge. It just goes to show how old stories often hide many truths that go deeper than the literal ones.

Story: *Lir*

About the Author:
Coral Atkinson / Choireil Mac Aidicin was born in Dublin, Ireland and came to New Zealand as a girl. She is a graduate of the University of Canterbury and has worked as a teacher, educational journalist and in book publishing. Coral has also published various articles, essays and educational texts.

Mythological Context: The Children of Lir (by Brian O'Sullivan)

Despite the weighty name associated with him (Manannan mac Lir), the mythological figure Lir turns up relatively infrequently in the old Irish literature. In those narratives where he does appear, he's most often referred to as 'Lir of Sidh Fionnachaidh,' Sidh Fionnachaidh being a cairn on Deadman's hill (halfway between Armagh and Newry) associated with the Otherworld.

Lir is most famous for his association with the fifteenth century *Oidheadh Chlainne Lir* (The Tragic Fate of the Children of Lir) which tells of his vexation when a competitor, Bodhbh Dear, is chosen as leader of the Tuath De Danann. Lir is appeased only when the latter offers him one of his foster daughters, Aobh, in marriage.

After their union, Aobh bears Lir two sets of twins (first, Aodh and Fionnghuala, then Fiachra and Conn). Unfortunately, while giving birth to the

second set of twins, Aodh dies. Bereft and grieving, Lir seeks solace by taking Bodhbh Dear's second daughter, Aoife, as his new wife.

Although she loves the children at first, Aoife grows to hate them and eventually strikes them at Loch Dairbhreach (in Westmeath) with a magic wand, transforming them into swans. Learning of their fate, Lir transforms Aoife into a demon and curses her to wander the earth forever.

The Children of Lir remain at Loch Dairbhreach for three hundred years, then another three hundred at the Sea of Moyle. After spending a third three hundred years off the coast of Erris in County Mayo, they return to their father's palace at Sidh Fionnachaidh only to find it deserted and in ruins.

At this stage, *Oidheadh Chlainne Lir* states that they return to Inishglory where a Christian missionary Saint Mochaomhog discovers them and cares for them until the curse runs its course and they're transformed back to human beings. Now withered old men and women, Saint Mochaomh6g baptizes them before they die.

The Children of Lir is one of the three great 'tragedy' narratives of ancient Ireland, the other two being *The Fate of the Sons of Tuirenn* and *Deirdre of the Sorrows*. It's a tale that pretty much everyone in Ireland is familiar with, primarily from school texts. Because of its popularity in the past, it was relatively common for storytellers to enhance the story by linking the tale to locations their audiences were familiar with. This is why, for example, we also find versions of the tale where the final resting place for the Children of Lir lies beneath a stone near Allihies village on the Beara Peninsula (growing up down there, this was something I assumed to be true throughout my childhood). The role of Saint Mochaomhóg was often replaced by Saint Patrick, depending on who was telling the story.

The story that we all know today is actually believed to have originated from a tale in the Netherlands dating from sometime around the twelfth century. In Ireland, this was the period when Norman knights — some from that particular region — had invaded the country and established a firm foothold. It's believed that the Normans brought this tale over with them and subsequently, a local author incorporated it into local legend.

Coral Atkinson's original and spirited retelling of the ancient legend completely reverses it by recounting the tale from the perspective of Aoife, normally portrayed as the villain in the piece. Portraying the Children of Lir as a bunch of spoiled brats might have been an act of sacrilege in our ancestors' time but provides a wonderful contemporary freshness to the tale.

Story: Transit Hours

About the author:
Marie Gethins is a Pushcart and Best of the Short Fictions Nominee. Awarded BAs in English Literature and Dramatic Art/Dance from U.C. Berkeley, she is working on her Master of Studies in Creative Writing at the University of Oxford. She lives in Cork, Ireland.

Mythological Context: The Male Selkie (by Brian O'Sullivan)

As with the earlier *A Mainland Mansie Meur*, Marie Gethins' tale involves a folklore creature — the Selkie — helping a human being through a difficult period of grieving for a loved one although, on this occasion, in a much more direct manner. This particular story involves the presence of a male selkie (a derivation of the previously mentioned Fear Mara).

Once again, most of the folklore with respect to the male selkie seems to originate predominantly from the romanticized tales of Walter Traill Dennison in his *Orcadain Sketches* and other writings. According to Dennison, the selkie-men were very handsome in their human state and had great seductive appeal for mortal women. Dennison's writing also outlined a ritual that was to be followed when a mortal woman sought contact with a selkie-man. This involved walking towards the seashore at high tide and shedding seven tears into the sea, an action that has great ramifications for the wounded protagonist in this story.

Growing up in West Cork, I spent many days sitting by the water's edge and often raised my eyes to find a seal head poking out of the water just offshore, observing me with interest. For anyone who's lived by the sea in Ireland and the British Isles, the possibility of transition from seal to human actually sounds eminently believable.

WORDS and PHRASES

amadáin

"And princesses not only need protection from the amadáin who might want to marry them, but also from murderers, kidnappers and those who'd gouge out your eyes."

Written as "amadán dubh," it means gobshite, fool, eejit, or simpleton. The phrase hails from Irish folklore and refers to the "dark fool" or "trickster fairy"

who is the "bringer of madness and oblivion." It is also said that Amadán Dubh "haunts the hills after sunset playing reed pipes to work his magic."

However, the shortened version of amadán, literally translated to "fool," is used fairly frequently and can be taken either with a pinch of salt, as a term of endearment, or as a fully-fledged insult, depending on the circumstance and the personality of the person speaking.

beering

"…no amount of beering or tears will bring them back."

"Beering" means to give beer to someone or to drink beer. The only connection we could find to the way the word is used in the above quote is the idiom "to cry in one's beer." We assume the author is saying that no amount of drinking beer or shedding tears will bring "them" back.

blackthorn tree

The blackthorn is associated with the dark side of the year and with the Cailleach, the goddess and ruler of winter. In Celtic folklore, the Cailleach emerges at Samhain to take over the year from the summer goddess Brighid. One portrayal of the Cailleach, of which there are many, is of a blue-veiled old woman with a raven perched on one shoulder and a blackthorn staff in hand, which she uses to create mountains, lakes and valleys and also bring about snow storms and rough weather.

The tree is a haven for birds who find protection amongst the tree's long thorns. It is said that the berries, leaves and bark of the tree stimulate metabolism, clean the blood, heal stomach upsets and disperse toxins from the body.

On the dark side, though, Irish folklore warns that the blackthorn is guarded by the fairy-folk known as the Lunantisidhe, literally meaning moon fairy. They are not friendly towards humans at the best of times but, should you try to cut wood from the blackthorn on the festivals of Samhain or Beltane, they will surely curse you.

bollicks

"All those fellas with their letters and their degrees and they wouldn't know a hall from a horse's bollicks."

"Bollicks" (also spelled bollocks, ballocks, or bollox) means testicles or nonsense. In Ireland, the word can be used to mean a despicable or notorious person, for instance: "The old ballocks was rude to me again." *The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) gives examples of its usage dating back to the 13th century.

In North America, we would say "balls," but "bollocks" is a popular swear word in Great Britain and, like "fuck," is used in many, many ways. Examples of common phrases are:

"Oh, bollocks!" — an expletive, like "Oh, gosh darn!"
"Bollocks to this!" — said when quitting a task too difficult or negative.
"That's a load of old bollocks." — indicates contempt for a subject or opinion.
"The dog's bollocks" — refers to something which is admired.
"Talking bollocks" — generally means talking nonsense or bullshit.
"Bollockspeak" — buzzword-laden and largely content-free, like gobbledygook.
"Bollocks up" — to mess something up.
"Bollocks-up" — a disaster, mess, or failure. Like "cock-up," "screw-up," or "fuck-up."
"Drop a bollock" — a malfunction, like "dropping the ball."
"A bollocking" — a robust verbal scolding.
"Bollocking" — a reinforcing adjective: "He hasn't a bollocking clue!"
"A kick in the bollocks" — a significant setback or disappointment.
"Freeze one's bollocks off!" — to be very cold.
"Bollock naked" — completely nude: "He was stark bollock naked."
"Bollocksed" — Drunk, tired, or hungover.
"Chuffed to one's bollocks" — very pleased with oneself.
"Bollock-head" — a shaven head or a stupid person.
"His brains are in his ballocks." — a fool.

And, a story we couldn't resist: From the 17th to the 19th century, bollocks or ballocks was allegedly used as a slang term for a clergyman, because some clergymen were notorious for talking nonsense during their sermons.

botharin

The Irish word bóithrín comes from small (*ín*) cow (*bó*) path. This path can either be man-made or created by cows meandering. "Bóthar" means road and "botharin" means small road. These words became boheen or bohereen in Hiberno-English.

A botharin, then, is a country lane, or narrow, often unpaved, rural road in

Ireland. It is said that the road or path should not be wide enough for two cars to pass and should have grass growing in the middle.

Bóthar was one of the five types of road identified in medieval Irish legal texts, the others being *slige* (on which two chariots could pass), *rót* (on which one chariot and two riders could pass), *lámraite* (a road connecting two major roads) and *tógraite* (a road leading to a forest or a river).

clarted

"The harvest from the earth and other trees I gather grudgingly, but I gather. Our small remaining family have need of what this land gives up. Yet it has taken from us what cannot be given back. The stony pool that claimed my son, the pestilent air that filled my daughter's lungs, the snow that clarted up my path when I went after help."

"Clart" in British slang primarily signifies muddiness or a mess, especially in the North of England. In Scotland, "clart" can also express affection or camaraderie among individuals, but in the quote above, it obviously means "obstructed."

close (noun)

"He named the place Hawthorn Close even though the tree was gone and McGroarty had no idea what a close was. But he liked the sound of it."

The noun "close" means an enclosed area, a road closed at one end, or a narrow passage leading from a street to a court and the houses within, or to the common stairway of tenements.

crannog

"He also kept us prisoners. We lived with our guards and Orla our old servant in a crannóg, on an island in the lake."

A crannog is an ancient dwelling or fort, made of timber and/or stone, built on a natural or artificial island in a lake or marsh, and often reached by a stone causeway. They were usually fortified by single or double stockaded defenses. Crannogs ranged in time from the Late Bronze Age into the European Middle Ages.

Crannogs are widespread in Ireland, with an estimated 1,200 examples in

existence. The choice of a small islet as a home may seem odd today, yet waterways served as the principal "roads" until the 19th century in much of Ireland and Highland Scotland. Crannogs are traditionally regarded as simple prehistorical farmsteads. But they could also have been boltholes in times of danger, status symbols with limited access, and inherited locations of power that imply a sense of legitimacy and ancestry towards ownership of the surrounding landscape.

Crannog construction and occupation was at its peak in Scotland from about 800 BCE to 200 CE. Not surprisingly, crannogs have useful defensive properties, although very few weapons or evidence for destruction appear in excavations of prehistoric crannogs.

daft

"And one or two muttered about a thorn tree but those people were elderly, rural, and always muttering something daft."

"Daft" means foolish, crazy, deranged, stupid, and frolicsome. It is an old word, first seen circa 1200, when it meant "mild, well-mannered." That sense deteriorated to "dull, awkward, uncouth, boorish" circa 1300. It further evolved to "foolish, simple, stupid" in the mid 15th century.

When the adjective daft is used, you know something extremely silly or obviously goofy is involved, which is perhaps why one of the definitions is "frolicsome."

desperate times call for desperate measures

"'Pardon, ladies, for my intrusion, but desperate times call for desperate measures. Lir, of the Ocean, at your service.' He bowed."

"Desperate times call for desperate measures" means that extreme and undesirable circumstances or situations can only be resolved by resorting to equally extreme actions. The phrase is derived from a saying of the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates which appears in his *Aphorisms*: "Desperate diseases must have desperate remedies."

flegging

"I got a fleg and was ready to jump out of my skin."

"Flegging" means to frighten. In Scotland, "to fleg" can also mean to rush around or away, or to deliver a blow or a kick.

gob

"The guards stared at the astounding stranger, swords ready in their hands and gobs hanging open. They didn't move."

"Gob" usually refers to the mouth, but it may also mean a small mass or lump. On the other hand, the plural "gobs" means a large quantity. This ambidextrous little word can be used in a totally different way again to refer to a sailor.

The word comes from Middle English gobbe or gobet, meaning lump, mouthful, and also from Irish gob, and Scottish Gaelic gob meaning beak or mouth.

To add to the confusion, Gob is a Canadian punk rock band from Langley, BC.

gurn

"But then he hears her gurn and cry and looks towards the rocks beyond. The Selkie wife now with her Selkie man. She turns her head and gives poor Mansie such a look. There's water in the corners of her eyes for she is weeping."

The English Dialect Dictionary defines the word gurn as "to snarl as a dog; to look savage; to distort the countenance." It can also mean to complain fretfully or peevishly, which is the sense of it in the above quote. In Northern Ireland, the verb "to gurn" means "to cry."

imbas forosnai

Imbas forosnai is a gift of clairvoyance or visionary ability practiced by the gifted poets of ancient Ireland.

In Old Irish, *imbas* means "inspiration," and specifically refers to the sacred poetic inspiration believed to be possessed by the *fili* (inspired, visionary poets) in early Ireland. *Forosnai* means "illuminated." In the Táin Bó Cúailgne, the woman poet Fedelm uses her *imbas forosnai* to predict the outcome of a battle. *Imbas forosnai* involved the practitioner engaging in

sensory deprivation techniques in order to enter a trance and receive answers or prophecy.

In the Celtic traditions, poetry has always served as a primary conveyance of spiritual truth. Celtic texts differentiate between normal poetry, which is only a matter of learned skill, and "inspired" poetry, which is seen as a gift from the gods.

Indian summer

An Indian summer, or "second summer," is a period of unseasonably warm, dry weather that sometimes occurs in autumn in temperate regions of the northern hemisphere. Several sources describe a true Indian summer as not occurring until after the first frost, or more specifically the first "killing frost." Weather historian William R. Deedler wrote that "Indian summer" can be defined as "any spell of warm, quiet, hazy weather that may occur in October or November."

The earliest known reference to Indian summer occurs in an essay written in the US around 1778 by J. Hector St. John de Crevecœur. The origin of the phrase is unknown, but it may have arisen because of the haziness of late fall weather caused by prairie fires deliberately set by Native American tribes.

In literature, the term is sometimes used metaphorically. William Dean Howells' 1886 novel *Indian Summer* uses the term to mean a time when one may recover some of the happiness of youth. The main character, jilted as a young man, leads a solitary life until he rediscovers romance in early middle age.

We like this description written by Sandy Griswold for the *Omaha Sunday World-Herald* in November 1922:
"…the characteristics of the season, when it appears in all its glory, are a mild and genial temperature, gentle southwestern breezes, unusual brightness of the sun, extreme brilliancy of the moon, a clear, blue sky; sometimes half hidden by a veil of gray haze; daybreaks redder than the splotch on the blackbird's wing, and sunsets laden with golden fleeces, the wooded valleys aglow with the fires of richly tinted leaves, still clinging to the listless limbs, or lying where they have fallen."

keening

"One day at work as he was dreaming — a grey and drizzly day, much like every other — he heard a keening beyond the rocks where he was standing

and saw a Selkie with sleek black fur."

"Keening" means an intense, mournful wailing or lamentation, often traditionally performed at a funeral or wake for the dead in the Gaelic Celtic tradition. Wailing and singing in formal lamentation goes back to Homeric times.

"Keen" as a noun or verb comes from the Irish and Scottish Gaelic term *caoineadh* ("to cry, to weep"), and references to it from the 7th, 8th, and 12th centuries are extensive.

According to Irish mythology, keening laments are sung by banshees. A banshee could sing when a family member died or was about to die, even if the person had died far away and news of their death had not yet come. In those cases, her wailing would be the first warning the household had of the death.

limpet

"Mansie Meur, he was a limpet gatherer and it was a hard, poor life for him."

"Limpet" can mean one that clings persistently, or a type of explosive designed to cling to the hull of a ship, or, as it means in this quote, an aquatic snail with a conical shell shape and a strong, muscular foot and which often adheres to rocks in intertidal areas.

The word was in use in the early 14th century, an alteration of Old English *lempedu,* which apparently originally meant "lamprey." Both animals attach themselves with sucker-like mouths.

Some species of limpet live in fresh water, but these are the exception. Most marine limpets have gills, whereas all freshwater limpets and a few marine limpets have a mantle cavity adapted to breathe air and function as a lung (and in some cases again adapted to absorb oxygen from water). All these kinds of snail are only very distantly related.

Norn

"I tell it them in Norn, the tongue of my forefathers, for it's a part I do not want for them to lose. And I've lost enough already."

For almost 1,000 years, the language of the people of Orkney was a variant of Old Norse, known as Norn, carried to the Northern Isles by Norwegian or Viking settlers. Norn remained the language of Orkney until the 15th century.

It is thought that from the late 1500s to the early 1700s, most Orcadians were probably bilingual — speaking both Norn and Scots English. But gradually, cultural change in society, coupled with the economic changes, meant that the old tongue began to die out.

"Norn" is also used to mean the three Norse goddesses of fate. Besides tending to Yggdrasill, Norns visit newborn children in order to determine their future. These Norns could be malevolent or benevolent, bringing tragic or beneficial events respectively.

on the pig's back

"McGroarty was on the pig's back."

"On the pig's back" is an expression used when someone is doing very well. It means to be in luck, in a prosperous, happy state.

The phrase is a literal translation of the Irish *ar mhuin na muice*, which is used colloquially to mean 'well off,' or 'in luck.'

The idea of riding on a pig's back reminds us of 'piggyback.' This term, in its original form, pre-dates 'on the pig's back' and also the phrase 'high on the hog.' All these expressions have some association with enjoyment. But there seems to be no connection between them, and the similarity of these three phrases no more than coincidental.

peedie

A "peedie" is a little one. In the story, it was used to refer to the author's small children. As an adjective it means, small, tiny, diminutive, or teeny-weeny. When used of speech, it means clipped or mincing ("a peedie wye o speakin").

piseog

Piseogs or pishogues are superstitious beliefs or practices, and the word can also mean charms or spells. A piseog was the most common form of curse used in old Ireland, and shouldn't be confused with the mallacht, which was a more powerful and direct form of curse used by bards and druids in battle.

As superstitions, piseogs are pretty common, and some are not exclusive to Ireland. Such beliefs are usually related to being lucky in what you do and are common the world over. Examples of Irish piseogs include "if a coal falls

from the fire it is a sign that you will have a visitor," or "if you're ever lost, turn your socks inside out to find your way home," or "open the back door if you hear a knock at the front door, to let the fairy out."

Protection from piseogs was afforded by sprinkling holy water in the four corners of your property, or water from a place where three rivers meet, or by dragging a gorse bush around the borders of your land.

The curse is not believed to have power itself, but to cause terror to the intended victim. But more than that, a foe, a begrudging neighbor, or even the fairies themselves might cast a piseog in order to cause real harm to someone.

The piseog was said to be most powerful when cast on May's eve, from midnight to the first light of dawn. If, during those hours, you were to cast your piseog, most often using an egg, raw or rotten, but also a piece of old meat, a raven carcass, or something similar, you could be certain of success. Some say it was the breaking of the egg that released the curse, so it might be put on a path or outside a doorway.

Farmers used to walk around their farms on those nights from dusk to dawn, for fear that someone might lay the piseog in the hay their cattle would eat, or in their fields. For it was most often farmers that were targeted. Piseogs were blamed for cattle falling sick, for stillbirths and crop failures, for milk turning sour, and all manner of misfortunes.

rookel

"Although the apples from that tree beside the graves grow thick and heavy, we cannot bring ourselves to pick them. Instead they fall, all in a rookel upon the ground, feeding the wasps and creepi-craalies."

All we know about "rookel" is that it's an Orkney dialect word. Our guess is that it means a mess, a muddle or a jumble.

skerry

A skerry is a small rocky island, reef, or islet, usually found near the coastline and too small for human habitation. They often form part of archipelagos or groups of islands. Though some are covered by the sea at high tide, skerrys may grow moss and small, hardy grasses, and are often used as resting or breeding places by animals such as seals and birds.

The term skerry is derived from the Old Norse *sker*, which means a small

rocky island in the sea. In the past, skerrys were often used as navigational landmarks for seafarers and also served as temporary shelters for fishermen.

In literature, skerrys are often associated with isolation, solitude, and the harsh beauty of the sea.

súgán

Súgán is a form of rope made in Ireland from straw, hay, or marram grass.

Súgán has many uses in making household items such as cradles and baskets. The most recognizable use of it is that of a woven chair seat, commonly known as a súgán chair. These chairs tended to have a wooden frame, the seat being made by weaving súgán through the frame. Straw ropes were also used for many jobs around the farm such as tying stacks of hay and straw together, thatching roofs and tying animals to posts.

Súgán has also been used as a pejorative term in the Irish language, the nearest English equivalent being "a man of straw."

tangie

"Your voice and gentle ways could tame the tangie, all covered with his kelp, and bring us safely back to harbor."

A tangie is a shape-shifting sea spirit in the folklore of the Orkney and Shetland Islands in the British Isles. A sea horse or merman, it takes on the appearance of either a horse or an aged man. Usually described as being covered with seaweed, its name derives from "tang," another word for seaweed. It is known for terrorizing lonely travelers, especially young women on roads at night near the lochs, whom it will abduct and devour under the water. A tangie is able to cause derangement in both humans and animals.

The tangie played a major role in the Shetland legend of Black Eric, a sheep rustler. The tangie he rode gave him supernatural assistance when he raided and harassed surrounding crofts. In his final battle with a crofter, Black Eric fell to his death in the sea. The tangie then continued to terrorize the area.

The Salmon of Knowledge

The Salmon of Knowledge is a creature in the Fenian Cycle of Irish mythology, sometimes identified with Fintan mac Bóchra, who was known as

"The Wise" and was once transformed into a salmon.

(See above for Brian O'Sullivan's comments on the story *In a Small Pond*.)

toque

A toque is any of several styles of small, usually brimless, close-fitting hats, but often means a white hat with a tall, pleated crown but no brim traditionally worn by chefs. In Canada, it means a knit cap and is frequently spelled "tuque."

During the medieval period, women wore embroidered toques, made of velvet, satin, or taffeta, on top of their head-veils. The market for knit hats was controlled by the British guild and none were imported in order to protect local wool workers. Smuggling wool out of the country was also a no-no, punishable by the loss of a hand. That law was apparently in effect for more than 400 years.

The Canadian fashion began with the fur traders. These adventurous woodsmen had to keep their knitted caps on to stay warm during the harsh winter nights. Also, red stocking caps became a symbol for freedom and the pursuit of liberty during the 1837 Canadian Rebellions.

weskit

"He dreamed of silk and furs instead of rough woollen trews and weskit that held the water."

"Trews" are trousers. A "weskit" is a waistcoat or vest, a sleeveless upper-body garment. It is usually worn over a dress shirt and necktie and below a coat as a part of most men's formal wear. It is also sported as the third piece in the traditional three-piece male suit. Any given waistcoat can be simple or ornate, worn for work, leisure, or luxury.

A waistcoat has a full vertical opening in the front, which fastens with buttons or snaps. Before wristwatches became popular, gentlemen kept their pocket watches in the front waistcoat pocket, with the watch on a watch chain threaded through a buttonhole.

The predecessors to the waistcoat are the Middle Age-era doublet and gambeson.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Bodb Derg

"Aobh and I were sisters, daughters of Bodhh Dear, the Ard Ri (High King). We had golden bells that tinkled in our curls and when we walked our hair was so long it dragged in the dew on the grass."

The High King's name has a variety of spellings, so we have used the shortest: Bodb Derg.

In Irish folklore, Bodb Derg stands out as an influential figure. He is considered the offspring of Eochaid Garb and the Dagda, one of the most powerful gods of the Tuatha Dé Danann. The intriguing etymology of his name suggests it may translate to "Red Crow." The crow is a bird linked to transformation, foresight, and the Otherworld in Celtic mythology. The red color symbolizes power, vitality, and the lifeblood of the land.

Bodb Derg is often associated with Áine, the Celtic goddess of love, fertility, and sovereignty. Some legends describe him as her consort.

After the Tuatha Dé Danann were defeated by the Milesians and retreated to the Otherworld, Bodb Derg was chosen as their king, signifying his wisdom, leadership, and authority over both the living and the mystical realms.

In the tragic tale of the *Children of Lir*, involving Manannán Mac Lir, Bodb Derg plays a significant role as a mediator and protector. After the children are cursed by their stepmother Aoife to live as swans for 900 years, Bodb Derg ensures their story is preserved and that they are cared for during their time in exile.

Bodb further cements his importance as the ruler of the Munster side. Along with Len, his skilled smith, he is involved in a crucial prologue to the legendary tale of Tain Bó Cuailnge, marked by his swineherd's conflict with that of the king of Connacht side, which results in the swineherds being swallowed and reborn as the formidable bulls Donn Cuailnge and Finnbennach, central figures in the famous cattle raid.

Throughout these stories, Bodb Derg appears as a fair and respected king, a central character within the tapestry of Irish mythology, illustrating themes of justice, leadership, community, and the intricate relationships among deities and mortals alike.

Micmac Indians

"The Micmac, they live among them, taking what they need in sap and in bark for their canoes, in branches for their fires, in meat for their suppers. But the Micmac let the forests live and they return the favor. They have their stories too, stories that grow from this, their land."

The Mi'kmaq are an indigenous group of people of the Northeastern woodlands, native to Canada's Atlantic provinces, primarily Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland, and also the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec as well as Native Americans in the northeastern region of Maine.

According to the Canadian 2021 census, 9,245 people claim to speak Mi'kmaq, an Eastern Algonquian language. Once written in Mi'kmaw hieroglyphic writing, it is now written using most letters of the Latin alphabet.

Sanday

"The trees push back against us here, us who don't belong. … But some trees I've taken out. I must build here a better home, although my heart's home is Sanday's shores."

The largest of Orkney's north isles, Sanday is a place of contrasts. It has beautiful beaches, sand dunes, and machair (low-lying dune grassland) found at the fringes of some of most fertile farmland in the islands. There are several small bodies of freshwater. Its low-lying landscape offers expansive vistas all around, and the light here is particularly dramatic throughout the year.

It's a haven for wildlife, with birds, otters, seals, and orcas regularly spotted. But it's also an island that has attracted attention over millennia, with hundreds of archaeological finds and important Viking sites discovered in the sandy soil.

The Picts were the pre-Norse inhabitants of Sanday but very few placenames remain from this period. The Norse named the island Sandey or Sand-øy because of the predominance of sandy beaches and this became "Sanday" during the Scots- and English-speaking periods.

FOOD for THOUGHT
(quotes from the book)

"And here therefore, I sing my songs and tell my stories. For folks need songs,

they need such stories. Without the tales we build and tell, we've naught to put our needs and natures to, naught to hold us back from being lost."
(From *Lir*, by Coral Atkinson)

POSTSCRIPT

There are many gods and goddesses in Celtic mythology, but two of the most important are the Dagda and the Morrigan.

In *Celtic Mythology Collections Book II*, Brian O'Sullivan included a story about the Dagda and, in honor of that, we include below a brief history of both gods.

The Dagda

The Dagda (usually written with the definite article) is considered the great god of Irish mythology. Portrayed as a father-figure, king, and druid, he appears as a warrior-leader of the Tuatha Dé Danann, a race of supernatural beings and invaders of ancient Ireland who win a battle against the resident Fir Bolg. Several battles follow against the seafaring Fomorians, and eventually the Tuatha Dé Danann are victorious. With his mighty club, inexhaustible cauldron, and great talent for playing the harp, the Dagda was a universal god in Irish mythology and thought to dwell in many places, including at Newgrange.

Newgrange, in County Meath, Ireland, stands as a testament to the Dagda's legacy. This Neolithic passage tomb, dating back to around 3200 BCE, is older than Stonehenge and the Egyptian pyramids, serving as a remarkable piece of prehistoric architecture. According to mythology, the Dagda used it as a dwelling for himself and his family. The winter solstice phenomenon, where the rising sun illuminates the passage and chamber at the very heart of Newgrange, echoes the themes of rebirth and renewal that are central to the Dagda's mythology. This alignment with the solstice underscores the Dagda's connection to the cycles of life, death, and rebirth, as well as his role as a god of light and darkness.

Dagda means the 'good god' or 'the great god' and the name often appears with a variety of spellings. The sense of 'good' in this context is 'many-skilled' because the Dagda was considered a master craftsman, warrior, magician and ruler. Some have identified him as a sky god and ancestor deity similar to Cronus in Greek mythology. He's also been compared to the Greek supreme god Zeus (the Roman Jupiter). However, his character as a divine warrior is

better represented in the mythological tales of early Irish history which were first written down from around the 8th century CE onwards.

The Dagda's nature—encompassing warrior strength, paternal care, and druidic wisdom—embodies the complexity of the divine, offering insights into how ancient cultures sought to understand the forces shaping their world. Figures like the Dagda are universal archetypes, reflecting the shared human longing for wisdom, abundance, and leadership.

Names:
Several other names or epithets reflect aspects of his character. For example, Eochaid Ollathair (Great Father), Ruad Rofhessa (Lord of Great Knowledge), and Dáire (the fertile one). The ancestral and death god Donn may originally have been a form of the Dagda, who is sometimes called Dagda Donn.

The Dagda is often described as a large, bearded man or giant wearing a hooded cloak. His depiction in peasant-like attire, with a rustic tunic, underscores his connection to the land and the common people, symbolizing his accessibility and his role as a protector of the tribe. In art, the Dagda is frequently shown with his symbolic attributes, which highlight his powers and responsibilities.

Attributes and symbols:
Associated with fertility, agriculture, manliness and strength, the Dagda is also connected with magic, druidry, and wisdom. He can control life and death, the weather and crops, as well as time and the seasons, emphasizing his role as a protector and provider. He has several symbolic attributes: magic staff or club, cauldron, and harp.

Dagda's mighty club was said to be so heavy that it had to be moved around on wheels and, when dragged, it left furrows so deep they were used as boundary markers between provinces. This great staff had a dual nature. It was capable of killing with the rough end (as many as nine men at a single blow) and resurrecting with the smooth end.

The Dagda's inexhaustible cauldron demonstrates his role as a provider and nurturer. When challenged to eat a huge amount of porridge from it, he accomplished this with ease, even to the side trimmings like roast pigs, goats, and sheep. The Dagda also possessed two pigs, one of which was always growing while the other was always roasting, as well as ever-bearing fruit trees. These attributes reflect the Celts' deep respect for hospitality and the importance of communal feasting as a bond of social harmony.

The Dagda's magic harp had two names, "Oak of Two Meadows" and "the Four Angled Music." The harp was forbidden by the Dagda from issuing any

sound unless called upon by these names. The harp was richly ornamented and made of oak which, when the Dagda played it, put the seasons in their correct order.

Before the Fomorians were defeated in a final battle, they abducted the harp, believing this was the best way to win against the Tuatha dé Danaan. Then, taking their wives and children, they fled as far as they could, confident that the Fomorian army could now crush the Tuatha dé Danaan. They found an abandoned castle to take refuge in and hung the stolen harp upon the wall of the banquet hall.

The Dagda and his men eventually discovered the abandoned castle and burst into the banquet hall. The Fomorians leapt up and placed themselves between the Dagda and the harp, determined to defend their prize.

Yet all the Dagda had to do was to call out the two names for his harp and, on recognizing its master's voice, the harp sprang from the wall and flew into his outstretched arms. As the Fomorians, who greatly outnumbered the Dagda and his men, approached with their weapons, the Dagda began to play the harp.

He first played the music of tears, making the Fomorian women and children sob and the men hide their faces in their cloaks to shield their sorrow.

He then played the music of mirth, making the Fomorians laugh so hard that they dropped their weapons and had no strength left in their bodies.

He finally played the music of sleep, a soft, beautiful tune sending all the Fomorians into a deep sleep in each other's arms.

Once the Dagda was sure that all the Fomorians were deeply asleep, he and his men crept away and returned to their homes.

The music of the harp was known to change the emotions of men, women and children in many ways. The Dagda played the harp for his men when they were about to go into battle to make them forget their fear and think only of defeating their enemies. On returning from battle he would play the harp to make them forget their wounds and sadness over lost comrades and think only of the glory of winning.

In the tract found in the *Yellow Book of Lecan*, there were two other items mentioned as attributes, the shirt of protection from sickness, and the cloak of shape-shifting and color-change.

Ceremonies:

For the ancient Celts, the Dagda was a prominent figure in the festival of Samhain which, on the evening of October 31st and the day of November 1st, celebrated the end of the old year (the end of harvest season) and the beginning of the new winter. This was also a time when the veil between the worlds was thinnest, allowing for communication with the ancestors and the Otherworld. If the Dagda and the war goddess, the Morrigan, came together at this time, then their sexual union would guarantee the fertility and prosperity of the tribe and its harvests and livestock in the coming year. For this reason, in Gaelic oral traditions in Ireland and Scotland, Samhain was considered the most auspicious time to become pregnant, for it symbolized the renewal of life forces and the reaffirmation of the order between the worlds.

Rituals and ceremonies often sought his blessings for bountiful harvests, fair judgments, and protection in battle. His symbols—the cauldron, staff, and harp—were not only revered in myth but also likely served as ceremonial objects in religious rites, embodying the Dagda's nurturing and protective qualities.

Relationships:
The Dagda has a vast array of familial connections which highlight his central role in the mythological narratives of ancient Ireland.

He is said to have two brothers, Nuada and Ogma, but this may be an instance of the tendency to triplicate deities. Elsewhere the Dagda is linked exclusively with Ogma, and the two are called "the two brothers." In the *Dindsenchas*, the Dagda is given a daughter named Ainge, for whom he makes a twig basket or tub that always leaks when the tide is in and never leaks when it is going out.

The Dagda's children are numerous, each embodying different aspects of life, wisdom, and the natural world. Among his most notable offspring are Aengus, Brigid, and Midir. Aengus, born of the Dagda's affair with the river goddess Boann, is the god of love, youth, and poetic inspiration. Brigid, a figure of immense reverence, is associated with healing, fertility, and craftsmanship. Midir, linked to wealth and the underworld, further exemplifies the Dagda's wide-reaching domains.

Another son, Cermait (anglicized as Kermit) was killed by Lugh after he had an affair with Lugh's wife Buach. The Dagda cried tears of blood for his son, and later, while traveling with his son's body in the east, revived Cermait with his healing staff. Cermait's three sons, Mac Cuill, Mac Cecht and Mac Gréine, avenged his death, and went on to become joint High Kings of Ireland.

His consorts, too, are of significant mythological importance. The Morrígan, often associated with war and fate, is one of his partners, emphasizing the Dagda's connection to the themes of battle and sovereignty. His union with

Boann, which results in the birth of Aengus, symbolizes the Dagda's influence over the rivers and waters of Ireland, further cementing his role as a deity of fertility and abundance.

The winning of Ireland:
The Dagda's narratives are filled with tales of battle, magic, and cunning, each underscoring his strength, intelligence, and fatherly care for both his people and the land. His involvement in the battles of Mag Tuired, by which the Tuatha dé Danann won control of Ireland, showcases his strategic brilliance and martial prowess.

The story is most famously told in *The Battle of Mag Tuired*, an 11th-century CE text which collated earlier sources. Another source is the 11-12th-century CE *Book of Invasions*. The invading Tuatha Dé Danann possess many great warriors with special powers, and the Dagda is foremost among them. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the accomplishments of their leaders, the invaders are victorious against the current inhabitants, the Fir Bolg at Mag Tuired, a plain in Connacht in northwest Ireland. The defeated Fir Bolg then disperse to remote islands and to Scotland.

Another battle at the same place follows 27 years later, this time between the Tuatha Dé Danann and the Fomorians, who are either semi-divine beings or demonic pirates depending on which source one consults. The Fomorians are fierce fighters with a fearsome aspect — they have one arm, one leg, and one eye in some versions. Initially, the two groups live peacefully together and intermarry but, in the battle which follows, the Tuatha Dé Danann are led to final victory by Lugh, who kills the one-eyed Fomorian leader, Balor. Despite his prowess and flattening of great swathes of the Fomorian army, the Dagda does not survive the battle. He is killed by buck-toothed Caitlín, the wife of Balor, or, at least, later dies from a wound inflicted by her. In later and contrasting traditions, the Dagda does not die but reigns over the Tuatha Dé Danann for 80 years before retreating to his underground palaces, likely a metaphor for the diminishing stature of Celtic gods following the spread of Christianity.

These tales and adventures are not mere stories; they are reflections of the values, beliefs, and concerns of the ancient Irish people. The Dagda's narratives, with their themes of balance, protection, and wisdom, serve as allegorical representations of the forces of nature, society's needs, and the quest for harmony in the face of adversity.

Modern references:
In contemporary settings, the Dagda's legacy is evident in the resurgence of interest in Celtic spirituality and pagan practices. Modern pagans and followers of neo-druidism particularly venerate the Dagda as a living symbol

of Celtic heritage and spirituality. His symbols, such as the cauldron and the harp, continue to serve as powerful metaphors for life's sustenance and harmony within the natural world.

The Dagda's Celtic harp is a national symbol of Ireland, appearing, just as one example, on every bottle of Guinness beer. But it also appears in a very large way, as the design of the Samuel Beckett bridge which spans the River Liffey in Dublin and opened to the public in 2009. Samuel Beckett was a Dublin native who won a Nobel Prize in literature.

Famed architect Santiago Calatrava designed the bridge. He built it in the shape of a harp, with 31 cable stays of varying lengths attached to a curving pylon that soars 157 feet high. Its harp-like shape pays homage to the iconic symbol of Ireland, representing the country's rich musical heritage.

The bridge can pivot on its axis to allow boats and ships to pass through, symbolizing the fluidity of movement and the ever-changing nature of life. This dynamic feature pays tribute to Samuel Beckett himself, a playwright known for his exploration of themes like human existence, time, and the cyclical nature of life.

The Dagda's enduring impact on Celtic culture transcends the annals of ancient mythology to permeate various aspects of modern spiritual practices and cultural identity. The Dagda embodies the quintessential traits of leadership, protection, and abundance, aspects that were highly valued in ancient Celtic societies, as they are today. His representation as both a mighty warrior and a benevolent father figure reflects the duality of life in themes of creation and destruction, life and death, central to human existence.

The Morrigan

The Morrigan (usually referred to with the definite article) is a complex and enigmatic warrior-queen goddess from Celtic mythology, especially associated with inciting war and foretelling doom, death, or victory in battle. She is often depicted as a fierce and battle-ready figure, sometimes appearing as a crow or raven on the battlefield, stirring up the fury and frenzy of battle or predicting the outcome of conflicts. She was a cunning shapeshifter, assuming the form of different animals or a human woman, old and ugly or young and beautiful, and a terrifying omen of death. The Morrigan is a symbol of both destruction and fertility.

She is said to have appeared in visions to those destined to die in battle. This figure was at times envisaged as a young and weeping female, at others, an

old and ugly woman washing in a river the bloodstained clothes or armor of those fated to die. There are also a few rare accounts where she would join in the battle itself as a warrior and show her favoritism in a more direct manner.

The Morrigan's home was thought to be a cave in County Roscommon in northwest Ireland. This cave was known as the cave of Cruachan and the 'Hell's Gate of Ireland' since it was believed to be a passage to the Otherworld. In one myth, the Morrigan lures the woman Odras to her cave by having one of her cows stray inside. The goddess then changes the hapless mortal into a pool of water. Cruachan was regarded as the seat of ancient kings of Connacht and has been identified as part of the group of archaeological sites at Rathcroghan in County Roscommon.

The *Dindshenchas* (tales of how places in Ireland earned their names) tie the Morrigan to the landscape through the areas of Ireland that bear her name. There is a burnt mound site in County Tipperary known as *Fulacht na Mór Ríoghna* ("cooking pit of the Morrigan"). The fulachtaí sites are found in wild areas, and are usually associated with outsiders such as the fianna, as well as with the hunting of deer. It has been suggested that she was closely linked to the fianna, and that these groups may have been in some way dedicated to her. The fianna were "bands of youthful warrior-hunters, living on the borders of civilized society and indulging in lawless activities for a time before inheriting property and taking their places as members of settled, landed communities."

The Dá Chích na Morrígna ("two breasts of the Morrigan"), a pair of hills near Brú na Bóinne in County Meath, suggest to some a role as a tutelary goddess, one who is a guardian, patron, or protector of a particular place, geographic feature, person, lineage, nation, culture, or occupation.

Names:
The name Morrigan appears in both Old Irish (Morrígan) and Middle Irish (Mórrígan).
In the Middle Irish period, the name was frequently spelled as Mór (with an accent over the "o"), which means "great." The second part of her name, rígan, means "queen" and is a cognate of the Latin *regina*. Her name is interpreted as "Great Queen" or "Phantom Queen," though "Great Queen" is preferred among scholars.

One of the most prominent characteristics of the Morrigan is her tripartite nature. In many stories, she appears as both an individual and as three goddesses acting under a single name. The identities of the three goddesses vary depending on the source. In most cases, Badb, Macha, and Nemain are named as "the Mórrigna," though sometimes Nemain is replaced by Dannan/ Danu (or Anand/Anu). These goddesses are also sometimes listed as sisters of

the Morrigan.

Relations:
Three more sisters of the Morrigan are three land goddesses, Ériu, Banba, and Fódla. Their names are synonyms for "Ireland," and they were respectively married to Mac Gréine, Mac Cuill, and Mac Cécht, the last three Tuatha Dé Danann kings of Ireland. They probably represent a triple goddess of sovereignty.

All these goddesses are the daughters of Ernmas, the great mother deity of Celtic mythology, and granddaughters of Nuada, the very first king of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Their father is, in some tales, the sorcerer god or Druid, Cailitin. The Morrigan has one son, the evil figure Mechi, who has three hearts, each of which contains a serpent. Mechi's father is not named.

In one version, the Morrigan's father is said to be the Dagda, who rules over his three daughters with an iron fist. In tales where the Dagda isn't portrayed as the Morrigan's father, he is actually her husband or lover.

Her coupling with the Dagda, also a major warrior-god, was an important part of the November 1st Samhain festival which the Celts celebrated to mark the beginning of a new year. If the Morrigan and the warrior-god the Dagda came together at this time then their sexual union would guarantee the fertility and prosperity of the tribe and its harvests and livestock in the coming year.

The Morrigan being connected to the number three is highlighted through her association with the Moon. In medieval or pre-medieval days, the Moon hiding a part of its face every month was thought to be divine. The three phases of the Moon, waxing, waning, and full, might have represented the trinity of the Morrigan. Also, the Moon always changing its shape might have been attributed to the Morrigan shapeshifting.

There have been attempts to associate Morgan le Fay with the Morrigan. But the Welsh "Morgan" is derived from root words associated with the sea, while the Irish "Morrigan" has its roots either in a word for "terror" or a word for "greatness."

Some tales:
In *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, the Morrigan is named as a member of the Tuatha Dé Danann, a tribe of magical people. The tribe's arrival in Ireland was met with resistance by earlier settler groups of the island, including the supernatural races of the Fir Bolg and the Fomorians.

In The First Battle of Mag Tuired, against the Fir Bolg, the Morrigan and her sisters aided in battle by casting magic spells: "It was then that Badb and

Macha and Morrigan [...] sent forth magic showers of sorcery and compact clouds of mist and a furious rain of fire, with a downpour of red blood from the air on the warriors' heads." The Fir Bolg are defeated.

The Fomorians proved more difficult to defeat in the Second Battle of Mag Tuired. As the Tuatha Dé prepared for battle against the Fomorians, the Dagda sought the Morrigan for prophecy. He found her at the ford of a river, where they had intercourse. Afterward, the Morrigan prophesied that the Tuatha Dé Danann would indeed win the battle, though their victory would come at the cost of great bloodshed. She promises to summon the magicians of Ireland to cast spells on behalf of the Tuatha Dé, and to destroy Indech, the Fomorian king, taking from him "the blood of his heart and the kidneys of his valor."

On the day of battle, the gods gathered and prepared to fight the hordes of Fomorians. When asked what skills the Morrigan would bring to battle, she replied, "What I shall follow I shall hunt." The battle quickly turned into a bloodbath and ended when the Morrigan incited bloodlust with her cries to the Tuatha Dé Danann. She intervenes more directly by distracting and exhausting the Fomorian warrior Indech, who is then killed by Lugh, another leader of the Tuatha Dé Danann. The Fomorians fled from her and perished in the sea.

The Morrigan was featured prominently in the Ulster Cycle of tales, where she both assisted and antagonized the hero of the cycle, Cú Chulainn. Like the Mythological Cycle, the Ulster Cycle is a collection of Irish stories.

In one version of Cú Chulainn's death-tale, as Cú Chulainn rides to meet his enemies, he encounters the Morrigan as a hag washing his bloody armor in a ford, an omen of his death. Later in the story, mortally wounded, Cú Chulainn ties himself to a standing stone with his own entrails so he might trick his enemies into thinking he was still alive. The tactic worked, and the opposing forces relented. It was only when a single raven, the Morrigan, landed upon Cú Chulainn's shoulder that his foes realized the truth.

The creature the Morrigan is most connected with is the crow or raven, which the Celts associated with war, death, and inciting conflict. This aspect of the Morrigan may well be the origin of the banshee, a female fairy that figures in later Irish and Scottish mythology. The banshee foretells death in a household by letting out a loud plaintive wail and, though rarely seen in physical form, when she is, she is an old woman with long white hair.

It is said that the sound of the banshee call is so terrifying that men die of fright. The shriek of the Morrigan was thus a horrible omen of misfortune to come. Apart from Celtic mythology, many similarities can be seen between

the Morrigan and the Valkyries of Old Norse legend, including their appearance either alone or in threes, their ability to prophesy, and their association with birds.

Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc

According to the 1896 publication details, *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* was written by The Sieur Louis de Conte (Her Page and Secretary) and "Freely translated out of the Ancient French into Modern English from the Original Unpublished Manuscript in the National Archives of France by Jean François Alden."

In fact, the book is fiction, researched and written by Mark Twain, a serious study with just a little of Twain's trademark humor, often a bit of sly mockery directed at both aristocracy and clergy. Though the "translator," Jean François Alden, is Twain himself, the Sieur (Mr.) Louis de Conte is a fictionalized version of Joan of Arc's page, Louis de Contes. Joan of Arc had been Twain's hero since boyhood and he considered *The Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* to be not only his finest work, but the one whose writing provided him with the most pleasure.

The novel is a panorama of stirring scenes and marvels of pageantry — from Joan's early childhood in Domrémy and her touching story of the voices, to the fight for Orléans, the taking of Tourelles and Jargeau, and the splendid march to Rheims. It is a beautifully written book, full of rich detail and lifelike characters, seamlessly weaving fact and fiction to form a gripping and informative novel.

About the Author:
Mark Twain is the pseudonym of Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835 - 1910). He was born and brought up in Missouri and, because of his father's death, left school to earn his living when he was only twelve. A great adventurer, he travelled round America as a printer, prospected for gold, and set off for South America to earn his fortune. He returned to become a steam-boat pilot on the Mississippi River, close to where he had grown up. He then became a successful journalist. He started to use the alias "Mark Twain" during the Civil War and it was under this pen name that he became a famous travel writer. He took the name from his steam-boat days — "mark twain" was the river pilots' cry to let their men know that the water was two fathoms deep.

Mark Twain was always nostalgic about his childhood and in 1876 *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was published, based on his own experiences. The book was soon recognized as a work of genius and eight years later the sequel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, was published.

Mark Twain is undoubtedly America's most famous literary icon. A hugely

prolific author, he wrote in almost every literary field — from novels to poetry to travel, achieving enormous popularity in his lifetime and continuing since then.

Translator's Preface

To arrive at a just estimate of a renowned man's character, one must judge it by the standards of his time, not ours. Judged by the standards of one century, the noblest characters of an earlier one lose much of their luster; judged by the standards of today, there is probably no illustrious man of four or five centuries ago whose character could meet the test at all points. But the character of Joan of Arc is unique. It can be measured by the standards of all times without misgiving or apprehension as to the result. Judged by any of them, it is still flawless, it is still ideally perfect; it still occupies the loftiest place possible to human attainment, a loftier one than has been reached by any other mere mortal.

When we reflect that her century was the brutalest, the wickedest, the rottenest in history since the darkest ages, we are lost in wonder at the miracle of such a product from such a soil. The contrast between her and her century is the contrast between day and night. She was truthful when lying was the common speech of men; she was honest when honesty was become a lost virtue; she was a keeper of promises when the keeping of a promise was expected of no one; she gave her great mind to great thoughts and great purposes when other great minds wasted themselves upon pretty fancies or upon poor ambitions; she was modest, and fine, and delicate when to be loud and coarse might be said to be universal; she was full of pity when a merciless cruelty was the rule; she was steadfast when stability was unknown, and honorable in an age which had forgotten what honor was; she was a rock of convictions in a time when men believed in nothing and scoffed at all things; she was unfailingly true in an age that was false to the core; she maintained her personal dignity unimpaired in an age of fawnings and servilities; she was of a dauntless courage when hope and courage had perished in the hearts of her nation; she was spotlessly pure in mind and body when society in the highest places was foul in both — she was all these things in an age when crime was the common business of lords and princes, and when the highest personages in Christendom were able to astonish even that infamous era and make it stand aghast at the spectacle of their atrocious lives black with unimaginable treacheries, butcheries, and bestialities.

She was perhaps the only entirely unselfish person whose name has a place in profane history. No vestige or suggestion of self-seeking can be found in any word or deed of hers. When she had rescued her King from his vagabondage,

and set his crown upon his head, she was offered rewards and honors, but she refused them all, and would take nothing. All she would take for herself — if the King would grant it — was leave to go back to her village home, and tend her sheep again, and feel her mother's arms about her, and be her housemaid and helper. The selfishness of this unspoiled general of victorious armies, companion of princes, and idol of an applauding and grateful nation, reached but that far and no farther.

The work wrought by Joan of Arc may fairly be regarded as ranking any recorded in history, when one considers the conditions under which it was undertaken, the obstacles in the way, and the means at her disposal. Caesar carried conquests far, but he did it with the trained and confident veterans of Rome, and was a trained soldier himself; and Napoleon swept away the disciplined armies of Europe, but he also was a trained soldier, and he began his work with patriot battalions inflamed and inspired by the miracle-working new breath of Liberty breathed upon them by the Revolution — eager young apprentices to the splendid trade of war, not old and broken men-at-arms, despairing survivors of an age-long accumulation of monotonous defeats; but Joan of Arc, a mere child in years, ignorant, unlettered, a poor village girl unknown and without influence, found a great nation lying in chains, helpless and hopeless under an alien domination, its treasury bankrupt, its soldiers disheartened and dispersed, all spirit torpid, all courage dead in the hearts of the people through long years of foreign and domestic outrage and oppression, their King cowed, resigned to its fate, and preparing to fly the country; and she laid her hand upon this nation, this corpse, and it rose and followed her. She led it from victory to victory, she turned back the tide of the Hundred Years' War, she fatally crippled the English power, and died with the earned title of Deliverer of France, which she bears to this day.

And for all reward, the French King, whom she had crowned, stood supine and indifferent, while French priests took the noble child, the most innocent, the most lovely, the most adorable the ages have produced, and burned her alive at the stake.

A Peculiarity of Joan of Arc's History — The details of the life of Joan of Arc form a biography which is unique among the world's biographies in one respect: It is the only story of a human life which comes to us under oath, the only one which comes to us from the witness-stand. The official records of the Great Trial of 1431, and of the Process of Rehabilitation of a quarter of a century later, are still preserved in the National Archives of France, and they furnish with remarkable fullness the facts of her life. The history of no other life of that remote time is known with either the certainty or the comprehensiveness that attaches to hers.

The Sieur Louis de Conte is faithful to her official history in his Personal

Recollections, and thus far his trustworthiness is unimpeachable; but his mass of added particulars must depend for credit upon his own word alone.

Introduction by The Sieur Louis de Conte

To his Great-Great-Grand Nephews and Nieces

This is the year 1492. I am eighty-two years of age. The things I am going to tell you are things which I saw myself as a child and as a youth.

In all the tales and songs and histories of Joan of Arc, which you and the rest of the world read and sing and study in the books wrought in the late invented art of printing, mention is made of me, the Sieur Louis de Conte — I was her page and secretary, I was with her from the beginning until the end.

I was reared in the same village with her. I played with her every day, when we were little children together, just as you play with your mates. Now that we perceive how great she was, now that her name fills the whole world, it seems strange that what I am saying is true; for it is as if a perishable paltry candle should speak of the eternal sun riding in the heavens and say, "He was gossip and housemate to me when we were candles together." And yet it is true, just as I say. I was her playmate, and I fought at her side in the wars; to this day I carry in my mind, fine and clear, the picture of that dear little figure, with breast bent to the flying horse's neck, charging at the head of the armies of France, her hair streaming back, her silver mail plowing steadily deeper and deeper into the thick of the battle, sometimes nearly drowned from sight by tossing heads of horses, uplifted sword-arms, wind-blown plumes, and intercepting shields. I was with her to the end; and when that black day came whose accusing shadow will lie always upon the memory of the mitered French slaves of England who were her assassins, and upon France who stood idle and essayed no rescue, my hand was the last she touched in life.

As the years and the decades drifted by, and the spectacle of the marvelous child's meteor flight across the war firmament of France and its extinction in the smoke-clouds of the stake receded deeper and deeper into the past and grew ever more strange, and wonderful, and divine, and pathetic, I came to comprehend and recognize her at last for what she was — the most noble life that was ever born into this world save only One.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc (c. 1412—May 30, 1431) was a national heroine of France, a peasant girl who, believing that she was acting under divine guidance, led the French army in a momentous victory at Orléans that repulsed an English attempt to conquer France during the Hundred Years' War. Captured a year afterward, Joan was burned to death by the English and their French collaborators as a heretic. Her achievement was a decisive factor in the awakening of French national consciousness.

Joan didn't hail from a place called Arc, as the typical Anglicization of her father's surname, d'Arc (sometimes rendered as Darc or Tarc) might imply. In medieval France, family names were neither fixed nor widely used. After her capture, Joan said that her father was called Jacques d'Arc and her mother Isabelle Romée, adding that in her hometown daughters often took their mothers' surnames. Instead, Jehanne—or Jehanette, as she was known—referred to herself only as "Jehanne la Pucelle" (Joan the Maid). She was also known as the Jehanne Darc, Maid of Orléans, La Pucelle d'Orléans, Jeanne la Pucelle, Maid of France, Maid of Lorraine, Maid of Vaucouleurs, Joan of Lorraine, Maid of Heaven, and The Virgin. According to Sieur Louis de Conte, the children she grew up with in Domrémy nicknamed her Bashful, Patriot, Beautiful, and Brave. In modern French, her name is always rendered as Jeanne d'Arc, reflecting spelling changes due to the evolution of the language over time.

Joan was the daughter of a tenant farmer at Domrémy, on the borders of the duchies of Bar and Lorraine. In her mission of expelling the English and their Burgundian allies from the Valois kingdom of France, she felt herself to be guided by the voices of St. Michael, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and St. Margaret of Antioch. Joan was endowed with remarkable mental and physical courage, as well as a robust common sense, and she possessed many attributes characteristic of the female visionaries who were a noted feature of her time. These qualities included extreme personal piety, a claim to direct communication with the saints, and a consequent reliance upon individual experience of God's presence beyond the ministrations of the priesthood and the confines of the institutional church.

Joan was canonized by Pope Benedict XV on May 16, 1920; her feast day is May 30. The French parliament, on June 24, 1920, decreed a yearly national festival in her honor; this is held the second Sunday in May.

Even if in real life Joan of Arc was not as flawless as Twain paints her, she was surely one of the most extraordinary historical figures ever — an illiterate peasant girl of 17 who feels chosen by God to put the rightful king on the French throne and to free France from the English yoke. Incredibly and

against all odds she completed the first mission.

Sieur Louis de Conte

Louis De Conte is a fictionalized version of Joan of Arc's real-life page, Louis de Contes, and provides narrative unity to the story. He is presented as an individual who was with Joan during the three major phases of her life — as a youth in Domrémy, as the commander of Charles' army on military campaign, and as a defendant at the trial in Rouen. The book is presented as a translation of de Conte's memoirs, written in his later years for the benefit of his descendants.

Domrémy

Domrémy-la-Pucelle ('Domrémy [of] the Maid'), is a commune in the Vosges department in Grand Est in northeastern France. The village, originally named simply Domrémy, is the birthplace of Joan of Arc. It has since been renamed Domrémy-la-Pucelle after Joan's nickname, la Pucelle d'Orléans ("the Maid of Orléans").

Domrémy and Greux were exempted from taxes "forever" by Charles VII in 1429. It was the sole request made of the king by Joan of Arc when Charles asked her how he could show her his appreciation for seeing him crowned. Joan felt that taxes burdened the villagers. Moreover, he wished to do a good deed for her success in fighting the English during the Hundred Years' War. Taxes were imposed upon Domrémy and Greux again during the French Revolution; the residents have paid taxes since.

Charles VI

Charles VI (1368 – 1422), nicknamed the Beloved and in the 19th century, the Mad, was King of France from 1380 until his death in 1422. He is known for his mental illness and psychotic episodes that plagued him throughout his life.

Charles ascended the throne at age 11, under the regency of his uncles, his father Charles V leaving behind a favorable military situation, marked by the reconquest of most of the English possessions in France. In 1392, while leading a military expedition against the Duchy of Brittany, the king had his first attack of delirium, during which he attacked his own men in the forest of Le Mans. A few months later, he narrowly escaped death from burning, Charles was again placed under the regency of his uncles, the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy.

From then on, until his death, Charles alternated between periods of mental instability. In 1415, Charles's army was crushed by the English at the Battle of Agincourt. The king subsequently signed the Treaty of Troyes, which entirely disinherited his son, the Dauphin and future Charles VII, in favor of Henry V of England. Henry was thus made regent and heir to the throne of France, and Charles married his daughter Catherine to Henry. However, Henry died shortly before Charles, which gave the House of Valois the chance to continue the fight against the House of Lancaster, leading to eventual Valois victory and the end of the Hundred Years' War in 1453. Charles was succeeded in law by his grandson (Henry V's son), the infant Henry VI of England, but Charles's own son was crowned first in Reims Cathedral and was widely regarded even before his coronation as the true heir by the French people.

Henry V of England

Henry V (1386 – 1422), also called Henry of Monmouth, was King of England from 1413 until his death in 1422. Despite his relatively short reign, Henry's outstanding military successes in the Hundred Years' War against France made England one of the strongest military powers in Europe. Immortalized in Shakespeare's "Henriad" plays, Henry is known and celebrated as one of the greatest warrior-kings of medieval England.

After his father's death in March 1413, Henry ascended to the throne of England and assumed complete control of the country, also reviving the historic English claim to the French throne. In 1415, Henry renewed the Hundred Years' War with France. His first military campaign included capturing the port of Harfleur and a famous victory at the Battle of Agincourt, which inspired a proto-nationalistic fervor in England. During his second campaign (1417–20), his armies captured Paris and conquered most of northern France, including the formerly English-held Duchy of Normandy. Taking advantage of political divisions within France, Henry put unparalleled pressure on Charles VI of France ("the Mad"), resulting in the largest holding of French territory by an English king since the Angevin Empire. The Treaty of Troyes (1420) recognized Henry V as regent of France and heir apparent to the French throne, disinheriting Charles's own son, the Dauphin Charles.

Agincourt

The Battle of Agincourt was an English victory in the Hundred Years' War. It took place on 25 October 1415 near Agincourt, in northern France. The unexpected English victory against the numerically superior French army boosted English morale and prestige, crippled France, and started a new

period of English dominance in the war that would last for 14 years until England was defeated by France in 1429 during the Siege of Orléans.

The Battle of Agincourt is one of England's most celebrated victories and was one of the most important English triumphs in the Hundred Years' War, along with the Battle of Crécy (1346) and Battle of Poitiers (1356). The battle continues to fascinate scholars and the general public into the modern day. It forms the backdrop to notable works such as William Shakespeare's play Henry V, written in 1599.

Robert de Baudricourt

Robert de Baudricourt (ca. 1400-1454) was a minor figure of 15th century French nobility. His principal claim to fame is to have been the first stepping stone to the noble life of Joan of Arc.

In 1429, Robert de Baudricourt's only title was captain of the royal garrison at Vaucouleurs. It was to him that Joan of Arc appealed to provide an escort to the court of Charles Valois, Dauphin of France. Initially, Baudricourt simply did not take the sixteen-year-old peasant girl seriously, but since Vaucouleurs was not a large town, he could hardly avoid her. Having cornered him in a public place, she began to lecture everyone present, holding them spellbound, and putting public pressure on Baudricourt to assist her. Finally, he relented, and provided an escort to visit the Dauphin.

Baudricourt advanced during the war against the English and over the rest of his career, rising to squire, then knight, and finally was made a lord.

Jean de Metz

Jean de Metz (born c. 1398) was a French nobleman who is known primarily for his role in the exploits of Joan of Arc.

His acquaintance with Joan began when she arrived at the fortified city of Vaucouleurs in 1428. At the time, he was a squire in the service of Robert de Baudricourt. Their meeting included an exchange in which he asked her who her Lord was, to which she replied "God." De Metz provided her with men's clothing in order to further her desire to meet the King of France. It was the devotion of de Metz and his fellow soldier Bertrand de Poulengy that persuaded de Baudricourt to her cause.

De Metz effectively became "the leader of the little troop," Joan's escort to Chinon, where she met King Charles VII; after this point, Jean aided Joan's

efforts by furnishing her a horse and necessary clothing. An aide to the King provided de Metz with some 425 livres for the expenses of "the Maid" and himself, including armor. Though there were suspicions of these men travelling with an unmarried woman, de Metz declared at her trial that though he, Poulengy, and "la Pucelle" (Joan) slept side-by-side when they camped for the night, her garments were "closely shut," and he never felt any sexual desire for her, "by reason of the virtue I divined in her."

After Joan's execution, de Metz was not forgotten. In 1444, Charles VII granted Jean a title of nobility, in recognition of his services "in our wars and elsewhere."

Bertrand de Poulengy

Bertrand de Poulengy (born c. 1392) was a French nobleman who is best known for his association with Joan of Arc during the Hundred Years' War.

De Poulengy was serving under Robert de Baudricourt in Vaucouleurs when Joan of Arc began demanding an audience with the King of France, Charles VII. Joan earned the support of de Poulengy and a knight named Jean de Metz, but de Baudricourt initially refused to help her. In February 1429, when Joan correctly predicted the outcome of the Battle of Rouvray, de Baudricourt relented and agreed to give Joan an escort to accompany her on her journey to meet the king. De Poulengy and de Metz disguised Joan as a male soldier and took her to Chinon, where the king was residing. De Poulengy may have accompanied Joan throughout her brief military career.

It is mostly unknown what became of de Poulengy after Joan was captured by Burgundians in 1430. He did participate in the retrial of Joan in 1456, where he detailed his experiences with her.

Yolande of Aragon

Yolande of Aragon (1381 - 1442) was Duchess of Anjou and Countess of Provence by marriage, who acted as regent of Provence during the minority of her son. Yolande played a crucial role in the struggles between France and England, influencing events such as the financing of Joan of Arc's army in 1429 that helped tip the balance in favor of the French. She was also known as Yolanda de Aragón and Violant d'Aragó.

A twentieth-century French author, Jehanne d'Orliac, wrote one of the few works about Yolande, and noted that the duchess remains unappreciated for her genius and influence in the reign of Charles VII. "…she is the pivot of all

important events for forty-two years in France," while "Joan [of Arc] was in the public eye only eleven months."

Pierre Cauchon

Pierre Cauchon (1371 – 1442) was a French Catholic prelate who served as Bishop of Beauvais from 1420 to 1432. He was a strong partisan of English interests in France during the latter years of the Hundred Years' War. He was the judge in the trial of Joan of Arc and played a key role in her execution. The Catholic Church overturned his verdict in 1456.

The goal of Joan of Arc's trial was to discredit her, and by implication, to discredit the king she had crowned. Cauchon organized events carefully with a number of ecclesiastics, many of whom came from the pro-English University of Paris. The trial opened on 21 February 1431. Concerned for the regularity of the proceeding, Bishop Cauchon forwarded a bill of indictment to Paris in order to obtain the opinion of university clerics, who agreed with the charges. In the meantime, the trial continued. Joan was unwilling to testify on several subjects. The court considered torturing her. The court proceeded to official admonition on the field of the abbey of Saint-Ouen. As Cauchon read her sentence of condemnation, she agreed to abjure. Shortly afterward she recanted and was burned at the stake on 30 May 1431.

Thomas de Courcelles

Thomas de Courcelles was a French theologian, born in 1400, of a noble family of Picardy, and studied at the University of Paris. In 1431 he was canon of Amiens, of Laon, of Therouanne, and already a very eminent preacher. He was one of the most able defenders of the liberties of the Gallican Church. In 1461 he pronounced the funeral oration of Charles VII. Thomas de Courcelles is especially noticeable in history by the part, although secondary, which he played in the condemnation of Joan of Arc.

Loyseleur

Nicolas Loyseleur, canon of Chartres, then of Rouen, replacing a canon who remained faithful to France, was noticed during the trial which judged Joan of Arc.

He entered Joan's prison several times, persuaded her not to believe the people of the Church, assured her that he was of her party, spoke to her of the king and of his revelations, promised her that she would be saved, captured her

confidence, and then went on to betray her.

Legend says that, overwhelmed by the condemnation, he wanted to rush to the feet of his victim to ask for forgiveness but that the English would have banished him from Rouen.

The Twelve Paladins of Charlemagne

The Paladins, also called the Twelve Peers, are twelve legendary knights, the foremost members of Charlemagne's court in the 8th century. They first appear in the medieval (12th century) *chanson de geste* cycle of the Matter of France, where they play a similar role to the Knights of the Round Table in Arthurian romance. The Matter of France (also known as the Carolingian cycle) is a body of literature and legendary material, addressing mostly Charlemagne and his associates. In these romantic portrayals, the chivalric paladins represent Christianity against a Saracen invasion of Europe. The names of the paladins vary between sources, but there are always twelve of them (a number with Christian associations) led by Roland. The paladins' most influential appearance is in *The Song of Roland*, written between 1050 and 1115, which narrates the heroic death of Roland at the Battle of Roncevaux Pass.

The Paladins were more than just formidable warriors. They epitomized the medieval concept of chivalry. Chivalry, a complex code of conduct, guided knights in combat, loyalty, and personal behavior. To be a Paladin was to serve the weak, uphold justice, champion Christianity, and maintain personal honor.

La Hire

Étienne de Vignolles (1390 – 1443), Sieur de Montmorillon, Chatelain de Longueville, also known as La Hire (the growler), was a French military commander during the Hundred Years' War.

La Hire joined Charles VII in 1418, when the English army invaded France. Although not a noble, La Hire was regarded a very capable military leader as well as an accomplished rider. He was a close comrade of Joan of Arc. He was one of the few military leaders who believed in her and the inspiration she brought, and he fought alongside her at Orléans. At the Battle of Patay, La Hire commanded the vanguard and won a great victory for France.

A rough, freebooting Gascon captain, it is said that, under the Maid's influence, he strove hard to give up swearing blasphemous oaths, but that, to

give him some means of venting his hot temper, she allowed him to swear by his stick.

A remarkable prayer of La Hire's has also been recorded. On his way to fight he met a priest and asked him for absolution from his sins. "Confess them first," said the priest. "I've no time for that," answered the soldier, "I have to fall upon the English. But I have done all that a man of war is accustomed to do." The chaplain therefore gave him absolution, whereupon La Hire fell on his knees and prayed.

"God, I pray Thee that today Thou wilt do for La Hire that which Thou wouldst have La Hire do for Thee, if he were God and Thou wert La Hire."

WORDS and PHRASES

bastille

"The English had built a fence of strong fortresses called 'bastilles' around Orléans — fortresses which closed all the gates of the city but one."

A bastille is a castle tower, or fortified building, and may also be a prison.

The Bastille, a medieval fortress on the east side of Paris became, in the 17th and 18th centuries, a French state prison and a place of detention for important persons charged with various offenses. A symbol of the despotism of the ruling Bourbon monarchy, it was stormed by an armed mob of Parisians on July 14, 1789, in the opening days of the French Revolution. The annual anniversary of the storming of the Bastille became, in 1880, a French national holiday called Bastille Day.

With its eight towers, 100 feet high, linked by walls of equal height and surrounded by a moat more than 80 feet wide, the Bastille dominated Paris. The first stone was laid on April 22, 1370, on the orders of Charles V of France, who had it built as a fortification to protect his wall around Paris against English attack.

bedizen

To bedizen is to dress up, to ornament or dress in a showy or gaudy manner.

Bedizen doesn't have a flashy history; its roots lie in the rather quiet art of

spinning thread. In the past, the spinning process began with putting fibers (such as flax) on an implement called a distaff. The fibers were then drawn out from the distaff and twisted into thread. Bedizen descends from the now obsolete verb *disen*, which means "to dress a distaff with flax" and which came to English by way of Middle Dutch. The spelling of disen eventually became dizen, and its meaning expanded to cover the "dressing up" of things other than distaffs.

bumper

The fairies were dancing around The Fairy Tree, 'intoxicated with the bumpers of dew sharpened up with honey which they had been drinking.'

Bumper, as a noun, means a fender, as on a car, or a log of wood placed over a ship's side to keep off ice, a species of pompano-like fish, or a crowded house at a theatrical benefit. But it can also mean a cup or glass filled to the brim, especially when drunk as a toast, and that's the description of the glasses from which the fairies are drinking their honey-sweetened dew.

chicane

"…when it came to delicate chicane, and scheming, and trickery — he couldn't see any further through a millstone than another."

Chicane, here, is a shortened version of chicanery, meaning deception, trickery, or skullduggery. It can also mean a serpentine curve in a road, deliberately designed that way to make drivers slow down. We don't see the connection to this one, but another definition is a bridge or whist hand without trumps. Chicane comes from the Middle French verb *chicaner*, meaning "to quibble" or "to prevent justice."

cyclopedia

"Cyclopedia" means an encyclopedia, which means the circle or compass of the arts and sciences, the circle of human knowledge. Hence, a work containing, in alphabetical order, information in all departments of knowledge, or on a particular department or branch.

Encyclopedia entries are longer and more detailed than those in most dictionaries. Generally speaking, they focus on factual information concerning the subject named in the article's title; this is unlike dictionary entries, which focus on linguistic information about words, such as their etymology,

meaning, pronunciation, use, and grammatical forms.

Encyclopedias have existed for around 2,000 years and have evolved considerably during that time as regards language, size, intent (presentation of a global or a limited range of knowledge), cultural perspective (authoritative, ideological, didactic, utilitarian), authorship (qualifications, style), readership (education level, background, interests, capabilities), and the technologies available for their production and distribution (hand-written manuscripts, print, and Internet). As a valued source of reliable information, printed versions found a prominent place in libraries, schools and other educational institutions.

diffidence

Diffidence is the quality or state of being diffident, meaning to be timid, shy, modest, or distrustful of one's own powers.

dungeon

A dungeon is a dark, often underground chamber used to confine prisoners. The original meaning of dungeon was of something overground rather than underground, coming from the Old French term *donjon*, meaning the "great tower of a castle," and the underground meaning only came later.

The word dungeon was first used in English in the 14th century for the strong tower in the inner part of the castle. Defenders could retreat to this tower if attackers got inside the castle walls. Part of the tower often included an underground room, the dungeon, usually used for prisoners. In time the spelling donjon came to be used mostly for the castle tower, and the spelling dungeon mostly for the underground room or prison.

Imprisonment was not a usual punishment in the Middle Ages, with most prisoners awaiting an imminent trial, sentence or a political solution. Noble prisoners were not generally held in dungeons, but lived in some comfort in castle apartments. The Tower of London is famous for housing political prisoners. Purpose-built prison chambers in castles became more common after the 12th century, when they were built into gatehouses or mural towers.

Although many real dungeons are simply a single plain room with a heavy door or with access only from a hatchway or trapdoor in the floor of the room above, the use of dungeons for torture, along with their association to common human fears of being trapped underground, have made dungeons a powerful metaphor in a variety of contexts. As a result, the number of true

dungeons in castles is often exaggerated to interest tourists. Many chambers described as dungeons were in fact water-cisterns or even latrines.

fosse

A fosse is a ditch or moat, especially one dug as a fortification and usually filled with water. The word comes from the Latin *fossa terra*, meaning dug earth.

gossip

"I will differ from you, gossip, and will undertake to show the company."

Gossip means rumor or talk of a personal, sensational, or intimate nature. But it can also mean a person who habitually spreads rumors, or a close friend, or in Britain, a godparent.

The Old English word *sibb*, meaning "relative" or "kinsman," long ago combined with the word god to form *godsibb*, which referred to a person who was spiritually related to another, specifically by being a baptismal sponsor. Today we call such a person a godparent. In Early Modern England "gossip" referred to companions in childbirth, not limited to the midwife. It also became a term for women-friends generally, with no derogatory connotations.

In the 1500s, "gossip" was a noun which meant a person, usually a woman, who delighted in idle talk, a newsmonger. In the early 1800s, the term was extended to the conversation of such persons. The verb "to gossip" first appears in Shakespeare.

hamlet

A hamlet is a small community which lacks churches, administrative buildings, or meeting halls. If a hamlet has these features, it's a village.

holy sepulchre

"In that closing sentence she invites them to go on crusade with her to rescue the Holy Sepulcher."

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, also known as the Church of the Resurrection, is a fourth-century church in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. The church is also the seat of the Greek Orthodox

Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Some consider it the holiest site in Christianity and it has been an important pilgrimage site for Christians since the fourth century.

huzzah

"Huzzah" (also spelled huzza and, in modern English, hurrah or hooray) is an expression or shout used to express triumph, joy, or encouragement. It can also be used as a call for coordinated physical effort, as in hoisting.

Whatever its origins, it has seen occasional literary use since at least the time of Shakespeare, as the first use was in 1573, according to *Merriam-Webster*.

immortelle flower

"…whenever a child died the fairies mourned just as that child's playmates did, and the sign of it was there to see; for before the dawn on the day of the funeral they hung a little
immortelle over the place where that child was used to sit under the tree. And the reason it was known that the fairies did it was this, that it was made all of black flowers of a sort not known in France anywhere."

"Immortelle" means everlasting and usually refers to any of various papery flowers, often dried and used as decoration.

"The fairies were still there when we were children, but we never saw them; because, a hundred years before that, the priest of Domrémy had held a religious function under the tree and denounced them as being blood-kin to the Fiend and barred them from redemption; and then he warned them never to show themselves again, nor hang any more immortelles, on pain of perpetual banishment from that parish.

"All the children pleaded for the fairies, and said they were their good friends and dear to them and never did them any harm, but the priest would not listen, and said it was sin and shame to have such friends. The children mourned and could not be comforted; and they made an agreement among themselves that they would always continue to hang flower-wreaths on the tree as a perpetual sign to the fairies that they were still loved and remembered, though lost to sight."

miscreant

"They were a fine lot, those miscreants."

A miscreant is one who behaves badly, often by breaking rules of conduct or the law. The word may also refer to one who does not believe in a certain religion, an infidel or heretic.

mitered

"I was with her to the end; and when that black day came whose accusing shadow will lie always upon the memory of the mitered French slaves of England who were her assassins …"

A miter is a liturgical headdress worn by bishops and abbots. Thus, "mitered" means shaped like a bishop's miter or entitled to wear a miter.

noble

"She was — the most noble life that was ever born into this world save only One."

Being noble means having or showing qualities of high moral character, such as courage, generosity, or honor.

rack

"There is the rack, and there are its ministers! You will reveal all now or be put to the torture."

The word rack is used in many ways, generally to mean a framework or stand on which to hold, hang, or display various articles. In the context of the story, it's an instrument of torture on which a body is stretched.

The rack is a torture device consisting of a rectangular, usually wooden frame, slightly raised from the ground, with a roller at one or both ends. The victim's ankles are fastened to one roller and the wrists are chained to the other. As the interrogation progresses, a handle and ratchet mechanism attached to the top roller are used to very gradually retract the chains, slowly increasing the strain on the prisoner's shoulders, hips, knees, and elbows and causing excruciating pain. By means of pulleys and levers, this roller could be rotated on its own axis, thus straining the ropes until the sufferer's joints were dislocated and eventually separated. Additionally, if muscle fibers were stretched excessively, they lost their ability to contract, rendering them ineffective.

rascal

"…he found Regnault de Chartres and some more of the King's pet rascals…"

We usually think of a rascal as one that is playfully mischievous but, in medieval times, a rascal was an unscrupulous, dishonest person, a scoundrel, one of the rabble or common herd.

Song of Roland

The Song of Roland is an 11th-century chanson de geste or epic poem based on the deeds of the Frankish military leader Roland at the Battle of Roncevaux Pass in AD 778, during the reign of the Emperor Charlemagne. It is the oldest surviving major work of French literature. It exists in various manuscript versions, which testify to its enormous and enduring popularity in Medieval and Renaissance literature.

sin

"Is a sin a sin, anyway, if one did not intend to commit it?"

In a religious context, sin is a transgression against a law of the deities. Each culture has its own interpretation of what it means to commit a sin. While sins are generally considered to be actions, any thought, word, or act considered immoral, selfish, shameful, harmful, or alienating might be termed "sinful."

The concept of sin has been present in many cultures throughout history, usually equated with an individual's failure to live up to external standards of conduct or with his violation of taboos, laws, or moral codes. In ancient Greek thought, sin was looked upon as, in essence, a failure on the part of a person to achieve his true self-expression and to preserve his due relation to the rest of the universe; it was attributed mainly to ignorance.

Sin does, however, have non-religious meanings. It can still be weighty, when it refers to actions of a kind that are likely to be strongly condemned. But it can also jokingly apply to a harmless act like eating one dessert too many, or can be paired with another word to refer to a failing of one kind or another, as in "literary/grammatical sins."

You might not want to be the one at the party who takes the last piece of cake, but then again, it would be a sin to let it sit there, uneaten. A sin is a deeply regrettable action.

temper

"…but her (Joan's) temper was up so high that she could not get it down right away."

Temper in this context means a state of mind or emotion, usually anger, rage, or passion. The word has another meaning. For example, when you temper something, you mix it with some balancing quality or substance so as to avoid anything extreme. Thus, it's often said that a judge must temper justice with mercy.

In addition to describing a tendency to anger, temper can also refer to one's mood in general; if you use the word in this sense, you might describe someone's temper as "angry" or "mild."

tierce

"(The dragon) was as long as a tree, and had a body as big around as a tierce, and scales like overlapping great tiles, and deep ruby eyes as large as a cavalier's hat."

A variant of "terce," tierce can mean any of the following:
—a measure of liquid capacity, equal to a third of a pipe, or 42 gallons
—a sequence of three cards of the same suit
—in fencing, the third position from which a parry or thrust can be made
—in music, an interval of a third
—a cask intermediate in size between a barrel and a hogshead: "a tierce of sugar"

torture

Torture is the deliberate infliction of severe pain or suffering on a person to punish, extract a confession, interrogate for information, or intimidate third parties.

Torture was legally and morally acceptable in most ancient, medieval, and early modern societies. There is archaeological evidence of torture in Early Neolithic Europe, about 7,000 years ago. When torture was legally regulated, there were restrictions on the allowable methods; common methods in Europe included the rack and strappado. In most societies, citizens could be judicially tortured only under exceptional circumstances and for a serious crime such as treason, often only when some evidence already existed. In contrast, non-citizens such as foreigners and slaves were commonly tortured.

Torture was rare in early medieval Europe but became more common between 1200 and 1400. Because medieval judges used an exceptionally high standard of proof, they would sometimes authorize torture when only circumstantial evidence tied a person to a capital crime. Medieval ecclesiastical courts and the Inquisition used torture under the same procedural rules as secular courts.

Treaty of Troyes

The Treaty of Troyes was an agreement that King Henry V of England and his heirs would inherit the French throne upon the death of King Charles VI of France. It was formally signed in the French city of Troyes on 21 May 1420 in the aftermath of Henry's successful military campaign in France. It forms a part of the backdrop of the latter phase of the Hundred Years' War, in which various English kings tried to establish their claims to the French throne.

FOOD for THOUGHT
(quotes from the book)

"It was thought that this dragon was of a brilliant blue color, with gold mottlings, but no one had even seen it, therefore this was not known to be so, it was only an opinion. It was not my opinion; I think there is no sense in forming an opinion when there is no evidence to form it on. If you build a person without any bones in him, he may look fair enough to the eye, but he will be limber and cannot stand up; and I consider that evidence is the bones of an opinion. But I will take up this matter more at large at another time, and try to make the justness of my position appear. As to that dragon, I always held the belief that its color was gold and without blue, for that has always been the color of dragons." (Sieur Louis de Conte)

"Oh, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings the heedless and unthinking are condemned." (Pere Fronte)

"None are so ready to find fault with others as those who are worthy of blame themselves." (Joan of Arc)

"Instead of setting a military commission to find out if this valorous little soldier could win victories, they set a company of holy hair-splitters and phrase-mongers to work to find out if the soldier was sound in her piety and had no doctrinal leaks. The rats were devouring the house, but instead of

examining the cat's teeth and claws, they only concerned themselves to find out if it was a holy cat. If it was a pious cat, a moral cat, all right, never mind about the other capacities, they were of no consequence." (Sieur Louis de Conte)

"To believe yourself brave is to be brave; it is the one only essential thing." (Sieur Louis de Conte)

"If I were under sentence, and saw the fire before me, and the executioner ready to light it — more, if I were in the fire itself, I would say none but the things which I have said in these trials; and I would abide by them till I died." (Joan of Arc)

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About the Authors

Twinkletoes

Lea Tassie grew up on an isolated homestead in northern British Columbia. Now she lives and writes in the beautiful, temperate, Pacific Coast rainforest. Her fiction includes cat humor, science fiction, and mainstream novels. Her non-fiction deals in a light-hearted way with the weird words and phrases found in the English language.

Mud Guppy

Leanne Taylor was raised in Central Pennsylvania. She attended the University of Valladolid in Spain, one of the oldest in the world, established

in 1241, and has traveled extensively in Europe and North America. She's been a truck driver, a welder, an interpreter, and a teacher, including in a bilingual school in Mexico City.

Books by Lea Tassie

Tour Into Danger

Cats in Clover
Siamese Summers
Cat Under Cover
Cats & Crayons
Calico Cat Caper

The Case of the Copycat Killer

Deception Bay
Deep Water
Dire Straits

Green Blood Rising
Red Blood Falling
Shockwave

A Clear Eye
Double Image
Eyes Like a Hawk

Harvest
Walking the Windsong
Connections

Two Shakes of a Lamb's Tail
Baa Baa Black Sheep, Have You Any Words?
The Wordy Ram

Books by Lea Tassie & Leanne Taylor

Medieval Mosaic I
Medieval Mosaic II